

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

July 13, 2026

Writer: Steve Emslie

CREATE
LASTING
IMPACT

Celebrating 104 years of Service

CREATE LASTING IMPACT 2026-2027



President **CHARLIE** opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to a special Club Assembly session, reminding the room that "create lasting impact" is this year's theme. Zoom attendees were welcomed, including Jeff, Brian, Tom Bill, Sasha, Sophie, Lynette, and Jenny.

President-elect **ERIC** took the podium for visiting Rotarians and guests. No visiting Rotarians were present, but the club welcomed Luke Farley, hosted by **KANIKA** and making his second visit, and Michelle Zhang, a San Jose Rotarian and nonprofit founder/CEO, who came as a guest of **YUDY**.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

In a departure from the usual format, the thought of the day was tied directly to this year's theme. Rotary International **President Olayinka Hakeem "Yinka" Babalola** of the Rotary Club of Trans Amaki, Nigeria, offered brief remarks: "Before Rotary can change the world, it must first change us. He reminded the club that impact is what endures — a polio-free world, universal access to education — and challenged members to



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*commit to fellowship and service that **creates lasting impact** "across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves."* President CHARLIE thanked him warmly, noting he had also seen the RI President speak at the international conference and found him "amazingly inspirational."

PRESIDENTS CLUB

HENRIETTA shared a milestone: this year marks the 20th anniversary of the **East Palo Alto Today** newspaper, launched in 2006



under the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media, which she founded in 2003. Before its launch, then-State Senator Joe Simitian signed a California proclamation alongside Assemblymember Ira Ruskin commemorating the Center. Henrietta was also honored with a resolution from

Supervisor Liz Kniss recognizing the Center's contributions to East Palo Alto. She thanked club members **DIANA DIAMOND** (who taught her to lay out a newspaper from scratch), **ROGER SMITH** (an original supporter, recently a contributor to the youth podcasting program), and several others including **TRISH BUBENIK, ROB LYMAN,** and **REBECCA GERALDI** for their support over the years.

Shoshana Shur, **GEOFF ZIMAN's** daughter also joined the Presidents Club in honor of her father, whose birthday was the day before — a tribute to the values that first drew him to Rotary.

WHISKEY TASTING RECAP

President-elect ERIC recapped Saturday's first annual **Matt Dolan Memorial Whiskey**



Tasting, an intimate gathering of about a dozen members who sampled several whiskeys and swapped stories in Matt's memory. The event was part of the auction, making it a fundraiser as well as a tribute — a combination

the club may repeat next year.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SAVE THE DATE DISTRICT DAY, SEPT. 19th. **REBECCA** introduced a flyer for the district's biggest event of the year: an all-day gathering on Saturday, September 19 at the San Jose Convention Center, bringing together all 65 clubs in the district along with local nonprofit partners to showcase collective impact.

Attendance is free for Rotarians; nonprofits pay a small registration fee, and the club is considering sponsoring nonprofits that need help covering it. Food will be available for a cost, with vegetarian, vegan, and regular options. Registration: [Rotary Collaborative Impact Summit - General Registration \(ID=77891583\)](#)

ANNUAL CLUB ASSEMBLY

MEET YOUR BOARD

The heart of today's meeting was the Club Assembly, giving board members a chance to introduce their roles and committees for 2026-27.

President CHARLIE reviewed his role chairing the board and previewed plans to close the feedback loop from the April club survey — the board met with Eric and Karen last week to begin building strategy around the results, with a fuller report expected before the end of the first quarter. He noted the club's satisfaction rate landed at an impressive 95-97%.

President-elect Eric spoke about learning the ropes from seasoned members and previewed a new "passion project" — bigger than a typical hands-on service day and designed to outlast any single president's year. The club is eyeing partnerships with a couple of nonprofits, echoing past efforts like the club's earlier work with food distribution programs.

The **Immediate Past President BRUCE** described a role built around supporting whoever's in charge: overseeing greeters (today's were Sunny and Judy), helping steward the Rotary Foundation conversation for Q2, and filling in wherever needed — including, this year, handling club bulletins.



Treasurer ANNE walked through the club's two budgets — operations and charity — and the ongoing challenge of balancing both while still funding meaningful work. Dues are increasing this year from \$425 to \$450 due to scheduled District and Rotary International dues

increases. Members with questions can reach out to Charlie. On the charity side, a few programs are getting a boost: the Gunn choir bus ride, "road to a career," and the return of

the speech contest — with the endowment performing well enough to help cover the difference.



Secretary RANDA covered the behind-the-scenes work of club records, ClubRunner updates, monthly board meeting agendas and minutes (prepared with Charlie), and the

weekly member emails that go out on Sundays.



Membership Chair KRISTINA described onboarding new members (with Luke as the current "guinea pig" for the process), a goal of 16 new members this

year, and plans for more outreach events — including a "bring a friend" event aimed at young professionals — supported by social media promotion. The We Care committee, led by Julie Jerome, was also mentioned.

Club Operations Chair KANIKA thanked the team supporting day-to-day operations: Dana Tom for audio/visual, Rebecca for the Welcome desk, Bruce for the club website, Ginny as Pinion editor, and writers Betsy, Jack, Steve, Randall, Christina, and Sally, plus Bruce Reed for Pinion distribution.



Club Services Chair YUDY ran through a long list of subcommittees: greeters (**JUDY** and **SUNNY** among them), new member talks arranged by **STEVE EMSLIE**, Coffee with a

Rotarian hosted by **DANA TOM**, opening remarks coordinated by **TRISH BUBENIK** and **ERIC JENSEN**, and the program committee chaired by **JAKE YOO** with a long roster of members lining up speakers. **SIMON** is leading this year's social events committee (interested in hosting a TGIF or weekend party? reach out), **JIM SUTHERLAND** leads vocational and longtime-member talks, and Andres leads social media.



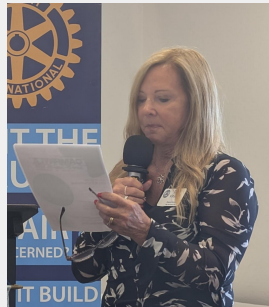
Social Media Chair ANDRES shared two updates. First, the club is ramping up its Facebook presence starting this week — more posts on club activities, community stories, and current events, with a QR code (<https://www.facebook.com/login/>) shared at the meeting so members can easily find and follow the club's page. Second, and something Andres is especially excited about: the club is launching a podcast series, featuring 20-25 minute informal conversations with members about their personal stories, on the theme of "enduring lessons of service." Nominations are welcome, and episodes are planned for Spotify. President Charlie added a goal of 30 posts for the year — roughly one a week — and asked members to keep sending in stories.

Community Service Chair JACKIE covered the committees within her purview: Annual Fundraiser; Grants; Hands On Projects; Climate Action and Public Relations. The club's climate action effort is looking for members interested in EVs, trees, water heaters, or going electric to help build out programming and participation.

Vocational Service Chair JOY OCHE introduced the Dr. Robert Smithwick Vocational Scholarship Program, named for our late member who was a founding member of the board of trustees of Foothill College. The nine member committee with chair **REBECCA GERALDI** — is aiming to support 10 to 15 recipients this year.

International Service and Environment Chair ULLRICH described attending international grant committee meetings to learn about projects that may eventually come back to the club for funding and involvement, as well as continued work with the Rotary Care Clinic.

Youth Services Chair PAM rounded out the board reports with youth services updates: a youth protection officer, **GARRY LIM** supporting Scouting America, **ANNETTE** supporting Girl Scouts, and Pam's own work overseeing Interact at Gunn High School and **Camp RYLA**. The speech contest, on hold in recent years, is returning. Pam shared photos from this year's leadership camp in the Santa Cruz Mountains, where the club sponsored three students — **Derek, Sophie, and Leilani** — from Pioneer High School and the Sobrato/Morgan Hill area. She recounted one student's account of arriving nervous and leaving with lifelong friends, calling the barbecue night with campers a genuine highlight of the "create lasting impact" theme.



President Weidanz asked for any questions and there were none.

CLOSING

Next week's speaker: Fred Gibbons, adjunct professor of electrical engineering at Stanford and former software company CEO with a background at HP, will speak on AI and the future of learning in his Stanford classroom

Take note that Thursday, **September 3, 12-1:30 pm** there will be a special joint event co-sponsored with the Los Altos Rotary Club at Mitchell Park, featuring guest speaker Prof. Michael McFaul. It will be a longer-format

program (45+ minutes plus extended Q&A) This is a one-time Thursday event, and the following Monday meeting is dark for Labor Day. Pre-registration details to come; the two clubs are planning to draw 200-250 members, with one guest per member as space allows.

President Wiedanz thanked today's volunteers and reminded all that the District-wide conference, "Creating Lasting Impact" will be September 19 at the San Jose Convention Center. Registration at: [Rotary Collaborative Impact Summit - General Registration \(ID=77891583\)](https://www.rotary.org/en/2020-09-19-creating-lasting-impact-summit).

Meeting adjourned at 1:30.

MEETING VOLUNTEERS

Greeter: Judy Kleinberg, Sunny Dykwel
Welcome Desk: Rebecca Gerald
Hybrid Host: Ben Threlkeld
Microphone: Jackie Wheeler
Photographer: Andres Calzada
Pinion Writer: Steve Emslie
Pinion Editor: Ginny Lear

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

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 and the Future of Learning
July 27 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Susan Roberts, heart transplant recipient Topic: Organ Donations
August 3 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Larry Diamond, Senior Fellow Global Democracy at Freeman Spogli Institute, Sr. Fellow Hoover Institute
August 10 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	District Governor Geeta Kadambi Topic: District 5170 in 2026-2027
August 17 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	5th District Supervisor Margaret Abe-Koga Topic: Outreach and Engagement