

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

September 21, 2026

Writer: Randa Hoffman

**CREATE
LASTING
IMPACT**

Celebrating 104 years of Service

CREATE LASTING IMPACT 2026-2027



PRESIDENT **CHARLIE WEIDANZ** welcomed our Zoomers and Roomers, and **ERIC JENSEN** pulled double duty at the welcome desk and on guest introductions. ERIC welcomed our visiting Rotarian, Nancy Press, joining

from her home club in Lake Oswego, Oregon. Nancy is founder and CEO of Child Aid, a literacy nonprofit that has trained roughly 11,000 teachers and touched nearly a quarter million children across rural Guatemala. We also welcomed Dr. Annamaria Lusardi's guest, Adrian.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

ANDRES CALZADA shared a 1943 letter E.B. White wrote to the New Yorker defining democracy as "the line that forms on the right" a recurrent act of showing up, not perfect agreement.

Andres tied it to today's divided moment, and to our own club: every Monday we sit down across our differences and raise money for scholarships and clean water, which is democracy at its



most working. CHARLIE thanked him for, as always, bringing real passion to the podium.

SPECIAL EVENT: SEPT. 28. LAST CALL!

Special OFF-SITE meeting on Monday, September 28, noon-1:30 pm (no lunch):

In order to accommodate a larger audience for Former Ambassador Michael McFaul, and to allow him more time to speak.

The meeting will be at the Mitchell Park Community Center, 3700 Middlefield Rd., PA. The format will be his speech with written questions following.

This meeting is being held in conjunction with the Los Alto Rotary Club, for members and guests. *It is an in person only meeting.*

Registration is required, there is no charge. Because we paid to reserve the room, we are asking our members for a \$5 donation to cover the room fee, if you wish to help. Register by following this link:
<https://square.link/u/h3AL61F2>.

VOLUNTEER & SERVICE UPDATES

KRISTINA LUGO reminded the club we're two weeks from closing our first-quarter membership drive. Please renew now, and send her the names of anyone who might want to join. Bring them to a meeting.

CHARLIE recapped Saturday's Collaborative Impact Summit in San Jose, where about eight members including **ERIC, ANNE CRIBBS, STANS KLEIJNEN, JOOP VERBAKEN**, and **BRUCE GEE** represented our work in world community service, local

grants, and vocational scholarships. A highlight: Lisa Blanchard of the Grateful Garment Project sent recorded thanks for our two resource builds ahead of the Super Bowl and World Cup, which generated nearly \$20,000 in goods "you guys are rock stars." Thanks also to **REBECCA GERALDI**, who put together our table's poster boards despite being under the weather, and to Stans for sharing that this year's Summit shifted toward local grants and nonprofits, a new tradition she hopes continues.



TIM MISNER is restarting the Climate Action Committee after connecting with the City's sustainability officer on possible projects. Email Tim if you'd like to join the brainstorm

[timothymisner@aya.yale.edu]



Past President **BRUCE GEE** was recognized by the Past District Governor with the Club Excellence Award for his work leading the club through 2025-26.

PROGRAM



ULLRICH SCHWERTSCHLAG introduced our speaker on behalf of SALLY TOMLINSON.

Professor Dr. Annamaria Lusardi of Stanford, an Italian native with a Ph.D. from Princeton, prior faculty positions at Dartmouth and Harvard, and past

service advising the U.S. Treasury's Office of Financial Education.



Dr. Lusardi has spent more than 20 years researching financial literacy. With Wharton's Olivia Mitchell, she developed the "Big Three" questions now used worldwide to test basic numeracy, inflation, and risk; only 28% of American adults answer all three correctly, and the gap is worse among the young and, notably, along gender lines in every country she's studied.

She shared research showing financial literacy strongly predicts whether a family can absorb a sudden \$2,000 expense,



independent of income or education, and that even wealth is no guarantee: 15% of pro football players declare bankruptcy within 12 years of retiring. She closed with three pieces of advice: stay actively involved in your finances even with an advisor, talk openly about money with family, and remember it's never too late to learn; and an image to hold onto: financial literacy is like water in an ecosystem, everything else depends on it to grow and flourish.

She also recommended two books: [Astor: The Rise and Fall of an American Fortune](#) by Anderson Cooper, and [Strangers: A Memoir of Marriage](#) by Belle Burden; both, she said, prove that money troubles aren't just a lower-income problem.

Charlie closed the program by tying it back to Andres's Thought for the Day: we built this country on "no taxation without representation," yet so many of us remain financially illiterate. Thank you, Dr. Lusardi, for sharing your research.

NOTE FROM OUR SPEAKER

Dr. Lusardi is teaching a Stanford Continuing Studies course this winter, Mastering Financial Decision-Making — eight Wednesdays, 5:30–7:00 pm PT, January 13–March 3, 2027, in person with an online option. Registration opens November 30.

CLOSING

President CHARLIE thanked our speaker, our members and volunteers. Thanks to everyone who came out, Zoomed in, and made it a full house. We ran a bit over on time apologies to Dr. Lusardi and anyone who had to dash but a great program is worth a few extra minutes.

MEETING VOLUNTEERS

Greeters: Kristina Lugo, Kanika Sabharwal

Welcome Desk: Eric Jensen

Hybrid Host: Sophie Tsang

Pinion Writer: Randa Hoffman

Pinion Editor: Ginny Lear



President CHARLIE with Past President BRUCE Celebrating his receiving a Club Excellence Award for his work leading the Palo Alto Rotary Club through 2025–26.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

September 28 Monday Special Rotary Event 12-1:30 pm Mitchell Park <u>3700 Middlefield Rd. Palo Alto</u>	Former U.S. Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul Insights on International Topics A shared event with Los Altos Rotary Club Registration required https://square.link/u/h3AL61F2
October 5 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Chris Witzell, LWV of Palo Alto , Topic: Prop. 40 The Billionnaire's Tax Pros and Cons
October 12 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Candidates Forum: Palo Alto City Council Moderator, Gennady Sheyner, Palo Alto Weekly
October 19 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Ray Purpur, Deputy Director of Athletics - Capital Projects The Game is Changing: What's Happening in College Athletics - and Why Stanford Matters

FINAL REMINDER

September 28 — No meeting at Baylands Cafe. Join us at Mitchell Park Community Center for a joint meeting with the Rotary Club of Los Altos, featuring Michael McFaul, Stanford professor, author, and former U.S. Ambassador to Russia. \$5, no lunch served — sign up in advance.