

Palo Alto RotaryPinion

October 26, 2026

Writer: Betsy Bechtel

CREATE
LASTING
IMPACT

Celebrating 104 years of Service

CREATE LASTING IMPACT 2026-2027

PRESIDENT CHARLIE WEIDANZ welcomed our Zoomers and Roomers, and **President-Elect ERIC JENSEN** introduced guests and visiting Rotarians. ERIC welcomed back Mayur Gowda, guest of Garry Lim, first-time guests Charlotte and her husband Mathias Klevend (sitting apart just for fun, he assured us), and Megan Boughton of the City of Palo Alto, guest of **ED SHIKADA**.



Visiting Rotarians included **Shinji Higuchi**, a 30-year Rotarian from Osaka, whose club, like ours, was founded in 1922 and is the second-oldest in Japan. Club banners were traded.

Cyrille Betant, recently of White Plains, New York, a former member of our club, now back in Southern California; and Pwint Htun from the University Rotary Club of Seattle.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

ERIC introduced **STEVE EMSLIE** club President in 2013-14. STEVE is a proud



Cal alum who has survived years in Stanford territory, and a man known for turning standoffs into handshakes and for legendary pizza parties. Fresh from his first trip to Santa Fe, STEVE shared an unattributed poem, "Santa Fe Briefly" poking fun at the 7,000-foot altitude, the brown-on-brown adobe required by city code, galleries selling bronze horses with heartbreaking shipping bills, and the red-or-green chile question (the right answer is "Christmas"). The verdict: absolutely worth it, but take a nap.

THE ROTARY FOUNDATION & END POLIO

Past President **BRUCE GEE** walked us through the printed chart on our tables, our "secret decoder ring" for the club's four different asks: Club dues, The Rotary Foundation, our club's annual charities dinner/auction, and our own Rotary Endowment fund drive.

This quarter's focus is The Rotary Foundation. About half of what we give comes back to the club's World Community Service for international grants. A letter to every member with a one-click donation link is on its way.

RALPH ADAMS reminded us that polio isn't gone: cases in Pakistan and Afghanistan are five times last year's, and poliovirus turned up in New York City's wastewater in 2022.

RALPH contracted polio at age nine in 1952 and spent



weeks recovering in a polio ward. He went on to graduate from West Point and served in the Air Force Special Forces. RALPH handed BRUCE a \$5,000 gift to the End Polio Now campaign, which BRUCE called a challenge to all of us to step up. Thank you, RALPH!

FIRST QUARTER REPCAP FROM CHARLIE

CHARLIE presented a first-quarter club recap. We're at 118 members, including our newest, **NANCY COUPAL** and **LUKE FARLEY**. He thanked **JAKE YOO**, **SALLY TOMLINSON** and the Program Committee for a strong speaker lineup (please take their survey); **PAM KRUDOP** for the Youth Service Committee sponsoring two RYLA students; **ANDRES CALZADA** for our new podcast; **JACKIE WHEELER** and **ERIC** for flags on University Avenue. Please join in with Veterans Day next on November 11; and everyone who ushered, staffed our Cal Ave table, hosted socials and joined us at the Collaborative Impact Summit. Member survey results came in between 92% and 97%. **CHARLIE then joined the President's Club** himself to thank everyone.

PROGRAM



SALLY TOMLINSON introduced and interviewed Daniel H. Wilson, who joined via Zoom from rainy Portland. A citizen of the Cherokee Nation with a Ph.D. in robotics from Carnegie Mellon, Daniel is a New York Times bestselling author of **Robopocalypse**, **How**

to Survive a Robot Uprising and, most recently, **Hole in the Sky**, an alien first-contact novel set in the Cherokee Nation. Science fiction came first, he said; science was the job he could actually get. A summer at Xerox PARC here in Palo Alto earned him two patents, one for filtering toilet flushes out of cell phone calls, which he called a summer

well spent. **Hole in the Sky** is set at Spiro Mounds in Oklahoma, near his family's allotment, which is laid out like the Pleiades of the Cherokee Star Woman origin story. Its three main characters each face the unknown differently: understand it, destroy it, or accept it.

Daniel has also done threat forecasting for the Air Force, imagining scenarios like mass AI voice spoofing, and said much of what Robopocalypse set five years in the future has



now arrived. He contrasted Western science, which isolates and eliminates unknowns, with Indigenous knowledge built for sustainability rather than growth, and urged young scientists to see past their blind spots. Daniel has also been a guest on Science Friday on PBS.

In Q&A, he said the best defense against AI voice scams is knowing they exist: slow down and call family directly. **HENRIETTA BURROUGHS** asked about advice for young Native people; embrace what makes you unique, he said, adding that he writes to put Native people in the future. **RANDA HOFFMAN** asked how his predictions keep coming true. Technology is easy to predict, he said; people are the hard part. Thank you, Daniel, and thank you, SALLY, for a thoughtful interview.

CLOSING

PRESIDENT CHARLIE thanked our speaker, SALLY, and everyone who came out or Zoomed in. We ran a bit over, but a great program is worth a few extra minutes.

MEETING VOLUNTEERS

Greeters: Rene Margan, Betsy Bechtel

Welcome Desk: Rebecca Gerald

Hybrid Host: Ben Threlkeld

Pinion Writer: Betsy Bechtel

Pinion Editor: Ginny Lear



Visitor and former member Cyrille Betant

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

November 2 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Jonathan Levin, President, Stanford University A Fireside Chat with the President Hosted by our own Bruce Gee
November 9 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Sunny Dykwel, Garry Lim, Lisa Van Dusen Topic: New Member Talks:
November 16 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Daniel Fells, NFL Veteran Topic: Recovering from Adversity
November 23 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	TBD
November 30 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	James Horsman, Senior Manager, Public Policy, San Jose Chamber of Commerce Topic: AI Literacy, how it works and how it will make our work more efficient
December 7 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Gunn High School Choir
December 14 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Final meeting of 2026