The Orange Peel

2026-2027 | President Steve Blair | Rotary Creates a Lasting Impact!

Next Meeting
Friday, Aug 21, 2026

Speaker - **Michael Cole of OVFO Arts**
Greeters - **Russ Rheams**
Invocation - **Bill Wagner**
Vocation - **Mairy Droese**
Raffle tickets - **Bill Wagner**

The Four-Way Test

Is it the TRUTH?

Is it FAIR to All Concerned?

Will it build GOOD WILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?

Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

Children's Law Center of California

Speaker-chair Licia Green introduced **Rebeca Ingerman** a Firm Director at **the Children's Law Center of California (CLC).** This nonprofit organization provides legal representation to children and youth involved in the child welfare system. She oversees the organization's Sacramento and Placer County offices.

Prior to CLC, Rebecca spent ten years at the Center for Family Representation in New York City, representing parents in child welfare proceedings. She is a graduate of New York Law School and George Washington University.

Who We Are and What We Do. Every time a child is placed in foster care there is a court case and the child is assigned their own lawyer. That's where CLC comes in.

A snapshot of Sacramento County and Placer County for March 2025 through April 2027: There were approximately 21,000 allegations of abuse or neglect. A report or allegation doesn't automatically mean that a child enters foster care. Ten years ago, every child that was reported was always put in foster care. Now the focus is on supporting the family and social workers work to prevent a

Recap of the Meeting Aug 14, 2026

Guests

Rebecca Ingerman - Childrens Law Center of California

Ernie Womack - spouse of past president Catrina Womack

Visiting Rotarians

None

District 5180 Governor

Dave Veden
2026-2027

Rotary International President 2025-2026

Olayinka Hakeem Babalola

The 2025-2026 Rotary International presidential theme is "Create Lasting Impact"

child going into foster care.

In the Sacramento and Placer counties that are 1,500 children in foster care. Approximately 500 children entered foster care each year.

When there is a concern or report, the county investigates. If the allegation is true, can the child continue to stay at home? Problems in the home usually involve poverty vs. physical abuse. Decisions are made about safety, family, placement, and services. It may require that a social worker check-ing or the parent may need anger management classes or a parent's substance abuse needs to be addressed.

The goal is to safely return the child home whenever possible, and if not possible, find another permanent plan, like finding a family member to stay with.

Children's Law Center of California

The Children's Law Center was founded in 1990 and CLC is the largest children's legal services organization in the nation. There are offices in Sacramento, Placer, and Los Angeles Counties. Between the three offices, CLC represents approximately 17,000 total children (approximately 1,300 in Sacramento) and the children range from newborns to 21 yrs old.

Each office has more than attorneys - there are social workers, case managers and peer advocates. The offices gave 500 staff members combined. The peer advocates are employees who are young adults and grew up in foster care so they connect with the youth.

CLC doesn't just ask "what is best for this child?" We ask, "what does this child want and what do they need us to do?" CLC give the child a voice so their wishes and wants are expressed to the judges. In a lot of states, the child doesn't get to speak and have an attorney.

CLC focuses on what the child wants and how to make that possible. For example if a child is removed for their home due to substance abuse how can they still have access to their parent - maybe it's nighttime calls to the parents or that the parent comes to school activities.

There is no "typical" foster youth experience. Some children live with relatives, some live with foster families, some return home (the goal!) and some are adopted. Others remain in care into their young adulthood.
While some children are in foster care because of severe abuse,
most are in foster care because of substance abuse, domestic violence, neglect, mental health challenges, housing instability, other safety concerns.

What do the children have in common? They all have experienced disruption such as separation from their family, uncertainty about where they will live and changes in schools or relationships. They won't have their bedroom, their pet, or their favorite food which causes confusion and mixed emotions. For some children they have significant trauma, exploitation, or juvenile justice involvement.

The goal of CLC is to bring safety, stability, connection, and advocacy to each step. Safety - advocate in court to prevent a young child returning to an unsafe situation. Stability - address education, mental health, placement, medical care, etc. Connection- helping a child maintain relationships with siblings, relatives, or other important people in their lives.

Rebecca ended her talk by saying that CLC's informed approach to advocacy makes it a powerful voice in local, statewide, and national child welfare system reform. For more information visit the website https://www.clccal.org/. President Steve thanked the Rebecca for her talk and presented her with a handcrafted pen made by member Bob Kurtz.

Announcements and Committee Reports

President Steve Blair told the club that the Rotary District is combining the annual District Conference with the Rotary Foundation Dinner this year. The event will be Friday, October 30 through Sunday, November 1, 2026. The conference will be held at Margaritaville Resort at Lake Tahoe. To view the agenda and register, visit https://www.rotary5180.org/page/rotary-district-5180-fall-conference-2026

Dennis Sarkisian gave a summary of the club's service time at the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank. It was another good day serving at the Orangevale - Fair Oaks Food Bank with our Fair Oaks Rotary friends. We accomplished quite a lot this morning, bagging and boxing groceries for

future distribution. While our drive-up client flow started slow, it picked up later on this toasty summer day. We had the privilege of serving **80 families, a total of 253 people in need**. Among those we assisted and served were 3 new applicants. Additionally, we served several walk-up clients. Thank you for raising your hand and serving those in our community struggling to make ends meet.

Dennis also reminded everyone to look at his email about the on-line Youth Protection training course. With any Rotary activity involving young people, we must maintain a safe environment, free of abuse or harassment. Further, if we witness or become aware of a young person being abused or harassed, we have any obligation to report it to club and district authorities.

If you are interested, Rotary International has prepared an excellent self-paced online course, titled **Protecting Youth, Program Participants 2026-27**. To access, log on the My Rotary website and locate the course in the Learning Center. It takes about 30 minutes to complete. If you have any difficulty locating the course, please let me know.

Bill Wagner, The Rotary Foundation Chair said that next week will be the start of the Joe Surra Football Pool. You chose a football team you want to win or lose and the amount per game.

Bill thanked the Rotary Club for donating money to The Knights of Columbus Golf Tournament.

David Shepard, Club Treasurer, sent everyone an invoice for club dues ($187). Pay by Zelle, credit card, or check.

Don Russell, Club chair, said that today is World Lizard Day. Don asked "What powerful lizard do you find in the City of Oz? The Lizard of Oz!" "How do you make an octopus laugh? With ten tickles."

There was a good turnout last Saturday at **Joni Cyr's** backyard party. Lots of good food and socializing. The recent **Dine Around** was held at **The Corner Grill** in Folsom. "What building is easy to lift? - a lighthouse". The owner **Dominic** spent time talking to us about his bread making, the style of pizza he makes and his Friday Lobster Roll Special (get there early).

Vocational Talk

Russ Rheams told the club about Joe Surra, a beloved Rotarian who died in 2001. Joe was an interesting person. Joe was proudly Polish and he had a knack for raising money for The Rotary Foundation. Our Football Pool was started by Joe and that is why it's named for him.

Joe would come up with interesting things to auction off. He would put an item in a brown paper bag with handles and staple it shut. He referred to the paper bag as Polish luggage. He had a great way of enticing everyone to bid on the mystery item. It could be something good or it could be a white elephant!

Joe was the controller for the Auburn School District for many years. He was the chairman of the board of Sierra Bank when it started up. And he owned a True Value Hardware Store. One day

after Joe retired, he was looking for something to do. At the time Russ and Lorie owned the copy shop, Joe showed up and say to Russ, "put me to work". Russ showed him how to punch books to bind them. This was around the time of "hanging chads" in the election news and they had lots to talk about. Russ said that this helped him understand Rotary and giving back.

When Joe's wife Pat was the Rotary Club president, occasionally there would a Friday meeting when a scheduled speaker would not show up and Joe would come to the rescue. He could step in to be the speaker at a moment's notice and no one was ever disappointed with his talk because he made every topic interesting.

In 20021, Joe was the Rotary President-Elect. In February of that year he wasn't feeling well for three days. His best friend Brian Buckley (also a Rotarian) dragged him to the ER. It turned out he had kidney failure and sepsis. It was too late and he was going downhill fast.

Russ and Lorie went to the hospital to sit with Joe's wife Pat. When he got there, there were 30 family, friends and Rotarians. David Shepard arrived with a cooler filled with water and sodas. At 2pm that day, Joe passed away and everyone was heart broken.

Don Morris was supposed to the club resident the year after Joe but with Joe's death he had to come up to speed and be the club president that coming June. The month after Joe died, past club president Bob Fritz drowned in Folsom Lake. Loosing two beloved Rotarians in such a short time took the wind out of the club's sails. The club was sad and quiet for a long time. Joe Surra was a man to be remembered.

Happy Fines

Don Morris is happy that his 6 year old grandson has started school.
Deanna Maddock and **Derek Maldonado** had a lovely trip to Fort Bragg to celebrate their 3 year anniversary.
Catrina and Ernie Womack are excited to have their first house guest, a friend from Florida.
Lorie and Russ Rheams won't be at the next meeting because they will be attending their granddaughters' wedding.
Becky Herz is happy now that her youngest child has moved out of the house and is going to Butte College in Chico.
Phyllis Macdonald is happy that the engagement party for her daughter went off smoothly last weekend.
Patty Wolff is happy be here.
Licia Green is happy that her husband Bob is coming home form a golf tournament.
Bill Wagner was happy about Russ's Vocational talk about Joe Surra!
Audrey Smith-Wiberg is happy that her husband Don is coming home from a car show. She's had to cook her own dinner.

The Orange Ball Raffle

This week there were nine golf balls and $47. **Bill Wagner** had the winning ticket and he pulled the orange golf ball out of the basket! That means that Bill will be selling raffle tickets next week.

Thought for the day

"Dream as if you live forever… Live as if there is no tomorrow."