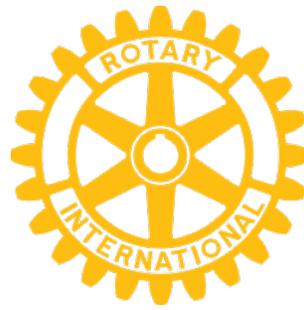


Rotary Club of Oakland



Club Meetings

January 29
Offsite – BART Hayward
Maintenance Complex
Behind the scenes tour

February 5
Jackie Keliiaa

Service Projects

SOS Meals on Wheels
Feb. 9 – 9:15 – 11:15 am
Also Feb. 23

**Alameda County
Community
Food Bank**
Feb. 22 – 8:30 – 11:30 am
Register on Club Calendar

Special Events

Lunar New Year Dinner
February 19 – 5:30 pm
Peony Seafood Restaurant

District Conference
May 1 -3, 2026
Reno, Nevada
Go to Club Calendar
for registration link.

**Rotary International
Convention**
June 13 – 17, 2026
Taipei, Taiwan

Committee Meetings

Next Club Meeting – February 5, 2026 – Jackie Keliiaa

On January 29th we will meet off-site at the BART Hayward Maintenance Complex at noon for a tour of the facility.

C.J. Hirschfeld announced our next regular meeting on February 5th will feature local comedienne, writer, actor and producer Jackie Keliiaa. The meeting will be at the Henry J. Kaiser Center for the Arts. The meeting will be in person as well on



Zoom.

For those joining on Zoom, use this link [Thursday Club Meeting](#)

Rotary Meeting Highlights for January 22, 2026

Call to Order

President Joe Goralka, aka “**Coach Joe**”, blew his whistle and called the weekly meeting to order via Zoom and welcomed all. He announced he was sporting a new tie, his 26th in fact. That’s because he’s been wearing a different tie every meeting in his effort to underscore the club’s longtime relationship with the business community. Looking dapper, Coach!

Later, after the Thought for the Day, **Joe** confessed that he had only blown his whistle to start, so he also rang the Rotary bell to make the meeting official.

Membership

Jan. 28 – 5 – 6 pm

Community Service

Feb. 4 – 5 – 6 pm

Karl Stucki World Community Service

Feb. 10 – 5 – 6:30 pm

Business Development

Feb. 10 – 5 – 6 pm

Fun, Sport, Entertainment And Adventure

Feb. 11 – 6 – 7:15 pm

KinderPrep

Feb. 18 – 5:30 – 6:30 pm

We Care

Feb. 19 – 5 – 6 pm

DEI

Feb. 24 – 5 – 6 pm

Membership

Feb 25 – 5 – 6 pm

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday!

Celebrating are:

January

01 – Maria Alderete

01 – Faye Brandin

01 – Ann Brick

01 – Moya Robinson

02 – Katie Hall

02 – Peter Turner

03 – Elida Scola

04 – Ramona Chang

06 – Rick Draper

07 – Stevan Alvarado

09 – Garrett Riegg

09 – Dudley Thompson

14 – Diane Schaffer

16 – Tom Love

19 – Gary Flaxman

23 – Sonja Fitz

25 – Jeannine Menger

Visiting Rotarians and Guests

President Joe asked guests to self-identify, then welcomed Darren Moore, a health and wellness coach checking out the club for possible membership. Isaac Hanson, husband of member **Maren Amdal**, also attended.

Thought for the Day – Jillian Loh Kearns

Oakland Zoo Board member and club member **Jillian Loh Kearns** shared a thought for the day from the esteemed Jane Goodall. It was about the importance of deciding the kind of impact you want to make on the world and then following through to ensure that impact. Thank you, Dame Jane, for succeeding!

Member Self Introduction – Ali Medina

Club Membership Experience Chair Linda Hamilton announced there's a new tool for new members to complete their three-minute self introduction and earn their permanent blue badge!

Modeling the way to do it was new member **Alexandria “Ali” Medina**, CEO of the Oakland Public Education Fund who joined us in April. **Ali**, as she likes to be called, created her own video to tell us a little bit more about herself. She is passionate about designing alternative education experiences for youth across the East Bay. She said that her leadership focuses on a mission of bringing educational equity to students in Oakland. **Ali** is a deep believer in the power of youth and their ability to make the change they want to see in their own communities. She has been in her position since April 2020 when the pandemic began. The agency's COVID-19 campaign raised over \$3,000,000 for food security, distance learning, healthy schools and direct aid to families. The agency continues to raise millions more in support of Oakland Undivided, a city-wide campaign to close the digital divide for 25,000 students in Oakland public schools. In her spare time **Ali** enjoys volunteering for Rotary and spending time with her children.

Announcements

Glowfari

Past President Michael Bruck let us know that there were still reservations available for Glowfari but reservations would close at 2:30 pm; 70 people signed up so far!

BART Tour

President elect-elect Kerry Hamill encouraged all to sign up for the following week's tour of the BART Main Maintenance Yard on Jan. 29 to kick the steel tires and learn how the agency keeps the trains running. Lunch will be served to those who pre-order it. Everyone will meet at Oakland's Lake Merritt Station to “BART over” to the tour site. Register on Eventbrite.

Rotary Gala

27 – Linda Hamilton
27 – Randy Reed
29 – Randy Arnold
30 – Ed Silva
31 – Marie Sescon

Membership Anniversaries

Thank you for your years of service to the Club and the community!

January

Carla Betts – 38 years
Dana Sack – 30 years
Daniel Cheng – 28 years
Greg Gilbert – 21 years
Linda Boessenecker – 18 years
Karen Friedman – 15 years
Kathy Dwyer – 13 years
Wil Hobbs – 13 years
Gary Hall – 9 years
Gabe Bruck – 7 years
Katie Hall – 7 years
John Malick – 6 years
Jesse Bowdle – 5 years
Greg Knight – 5 years
Kevin Hunter – 4 years
Jennifer Shanoski – 2 years
Kathleen Uribe – 2 years
Vera Hannush – 1 year
Charlene Wang – 1 year

Kerry also announced that the club's annual gala will take place on April 23rd this year to raise funds to support the programs and project budget's for the 2026-27 Rotary Year. The success of the Gala helps determine the potential for the club's success in funding important initiatives such as youth scholarships, service days in the community, and so much more. Each Rotarian is encouraged to support the Gala at a level that is significant to their individual circumstance, including purchasing tickets and/or becoming a major event sponsor. Stay tuned for more details and a call from a committee member

Annual Speech Contest

Speech Contest Chairman Bill Swartz is looking for volunteers to help with the Feb. 26 Rotary Speech Contest as either a judge, timekeeper or greeter. He is working on promoting the contest by visiting local schools and has 3 contestants confirmed so far but can accommodate up to six total. Contact him for more details.

District Mid-Year Leadership Conference

Past President Shannon Hackley announced that the Mid-Year District 5170 meeting will be on January 31st at the Fremont Event Center. Those who attend will have an opportunity to meet Larry Lunsford, the Rotary International President-elect, and hear presentations on ways to enhance leadership skills. Our club is being spotlighted for its many achievements!

Reception Honoring Gail Uilkema

For nearly 40 years, **Gail Uilkema** has been a proud and active member of our club who has served many local and international Rotary projects. To thank her for her contributions before she embarks on a new life chapter and relocation to San Diego, **Julie Fox** announced that a reception for **Gail** will be held Feb. 5 at 11:30 am before the day's regular meeting at the Henry J. Kaiser Center. Please attend to give her your best wishes.

Brown Bag Locations Needed

After a pandemic hiatus, the club is reintroducing its ever-popular Brown Bag Lunch day where Rotarians visit worksites (or art studios, nonprofits, schools etc.) of fellow Rotarians to learn more about them. Contact **Past President David Stein** if you'd like to be a Brown Bag Visit Host on April 16 from noon-1:30 pm. Dazzle a small group of Rotarians with a tour, presentation or other interesting activity! Lunch is arranged by Rotary.

Rotary on the Run Award to Martha Goralka

How many husbands have an opportunity to present their wives with a medal? Well, perhaps most should. But there was a unique opportunity for **Coach Joe** to present his wife Martha with a Rotary on the Run Medal in appreciation for her support to him as president with so many days and evenings, um, indeed "on the run!" Fortunately, Martha uniquely understands the time and family sacrifices, as

she herself is the Charter President of the Delta Antioch Rotary Club. Thanks Martha, for *all* your support

Speaker for the Day — William B. Taylor, Jr.

Past President David Stein introduced our speaker of the day, William B. Taylor Jr., the esteemed former Ambassador to Ukraine (2006-2009), and former Charge d'affaires ad interim to Ukraine (2019-2020). He is an American diplomat, government official, former military officer and decorated Vietnam War hero. Ambassador Taylor is a graduate of Harvard Kennedy School and the U.S. Military Academy.

Ambassador Taylor focused his remarks on Russia's War on Ukraine and emphasized how strong the United States interest must remain in ensuring that Russia does not win its 14-year history of attacks on Ukraine. Russia's war against Ukraine are in violation of the treaties, principles, deals and actions that since WWII prohibited the taking of territory from another nation. Added to this are Russia's war crime atrocities and human rights violations against Ukrainian soldiers and civilians, and its outright kidnapping 19,000 Ukrainian children, all as alleged by the International Criminal Court. Taylor says the U.S. needs to prevail in whatever diplomatic advancements are achieved. He believes the war will only end when Putin realizes he cannot win, however at this time Putin still believes he can indeed win, says Taylor. Trump must use U.S. leverage militarily and economically to change Putin's mind. So perhaps it is fortunate that Trump is coming to realize that Putin has been playing him, while Putin is likely hoping to "wait out" Trump. While it is at least fortunate that the U.S. is selling weapons to Europe and then Europe is supplying them to Ukraine, Taylor believes a strategic move should be made by the Administration and Congress to again provide direct military assistance to Ukraine, and to ratchet up the economic hardship on Russia. Anything less will embolden Putin.

After taking questions, **Coach Joe** thanked Ambassador Taylor for his time and commentary and advised him that a donation was made in his honor to the End Polio Now Campaign. Taylor said he was moved by the gesture and thanked Rotary for its world-wide impact on polio to date.

image.png

Bellringers

Dana Sack rang the bell twice: first in honor of Martin Luther King Day and in recognition that our own Rotarian **Lois Corrin** was known to Rev. King, who pronounced her a pretty child when she met him; and secondly in honor of the birth recently of his newest granddaughter.

Adjourn

Coach Joe shared that through Rotary world peace will be established one day and polio will be eliminated as he adjourned the meeting promptly at 1:30 pm.