

# Rotary Club of Oakland



## We Care Corner

The We Care Committee reaches out to members when help is needed for a variety of reasons.

Areas of expertise include:

Information on home care, equipment & supplies  
Post surgery help  
Logging on to Zoom  
A ride to the weekly Club meeting  
Choosing a committee  
Some cheer during a rough time

Send a confidential email to the We Care Committee address [RCOWeCareCommittee@gmail.com](mailto:RCOWeCareCommittee@gmail.com)

We will reach out with sensitivity and be sure we offer appropriate support.

Rotary is here for you. Let's stay close and connect!

## Club Meetings

January 8  
Mayor Barbara Lee

## Service Projects

## Special Events

**Glowfair – Oakland Zoo**  
January 22 – 5:30 – 7 pm

**District Conference**  
May 1 -3, 2026  
Reno, Nevada

## Next Club Meeting – January 8, 2026 – Mayor Barbara Lee

Happy holidays! After the club's traditional two-week winter break our next meeting will be on January 8<sup>th</sup>. **Bob Harris** announced our speaker will be Honorary Rotarian and Oakland Mayor Barbara Lee. She will talk about her



2026 plans for Oakland.

**The meeting will be held at 12:30 pm at the Henry J. Kaiser Center for the Arts, the new home for the Club, at 10 10<sup>th</sup> Street.**

The meeting will be in-person as well as on Zoom.

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

## Rotary Meeting Highlights for December 18, 2025

### Call to Order

**President Joe Goralka**, aka “**Coach Joe**” welcomed all to the club's last meeting of the year and also its last meeting in the California Ballroom. He invited introductions for visiting Rotarians and guests.

Discount Registration  
Fee available until  
Dec. 31. Go to Club  
Calendar for registration  
link.

## Rotary International Convention

June 13 – 17, 2026  
Taipei, Taiwan  
Register and pay in  
full by Dec 15, 2025  
for discount.

## Committee Meetings

### KinderPrep

Dec. 17 – 5:30 – 6:30 pm

### We Care

Dec. 18 – 5 – 6 pm

### Business Development

Jan. 13 – 5 – 6 pm

### Karl Stuck World Community Service

Jan. 14 – 5 – 6:30 pm

### Fun, Sport and Adventure

Jan. 14 – 6 – 7:15 pm

## Birthday Greetings

### Happy Birthday!

Celebrating are:

December

01 – Matt Davis

01 – Nik Dehejia

01 – Rosie Torres

05 – Ana Chretien

06 – Eric Angstadt

06 – Tya Modeste

13 – Stew Epstein

16 – Ginni Ring

16 – Danny Wan



## Visiting Rotarians and Guests

**President Joe** took the lead and introduced **Past President Jon Gresley**, now a member of the Truckee Rotary Club, and Brad Howard, past District 5170 Governor who has worn many distinguished leadership hats at Rotary International and is currently chair of the 2027 Rotary International Convention in Dubai.

**Past President Shannon Hackley** introduced guests Eric and Karen Lopez. Eric has volunteered at a Camp Enterprise event.

**John and Pam Claassen** introduced their son Nicholas who graduated recently from San Jose State University.

## Thought for the Day – Marissa Betts

**Marissa Betts** shared a quote from Mr. Rogers who said “we live in a world in which we need to share responsibility...those who see the need are my heroes.” **Marissa** then shared that she felt as though she had grown up with the club thanks to her grandmother, **Past President Carla Betts**, and was now a proud member herself. She thanked the club for giving her many heroes and opportunities to contribute to the community.

## United Kingdom Banner Exchange

**Coach Joe** welcomed **Bill Palmer** to the podium to present a banner he had obtained while visiting the Rotary Club of Manchester, England. **Joe** gave **Bill** one of our club banners to send their way, and then encouraged all to do likewise while traveling.

- 19 – Peter Sherris
- 20 – Rick Baskin
- 20 – Teresa Weyand
- 23 – Gudrun Dybdal
- 23 – Elizabeth Johnson
- 24 – Mona Hall
- 27 – Jessica Arline
- 28 – Gary Hall
- 31 – Kathleen Uribe

## Membership Anniversaries

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

### December

- Sheldon Crandall – 55 years
- L. Morris Johnson – 47 years
- Gail Uilkema – 38 years
- David Douglas – 36 years
- Bonnie Hamlin – 32 years
- Kristina Brouhard – 24 years
- Mark Rosen – 23 years
- Catherine Coleman – 21 years
- Stephanie Bolden – 17 years
- Sedrick Tydus – 13 years
- Allison Bliss – 12 years
- Stevan Alvarado – 12 years
- Joseph Koroma – 8 years
- Stew Epstein – 4 years
- Marleen Sacks – 3 years
- Patricia Wells – 3 years
- Jerry Owen – 2 years
- Bonnie Prestridge – 2 years
- Carey Clausen – 2 years
- Brett Badelle – 1 year
- Blase Bova – 1 year
- Jay Conner – 1 year



## New Paul Harris Fellow – Gabe Bruck

**Ruth Stroup** was invited to the podium as the club's Rotary Foundation Chair to announce the latest Paul Harris Fellow and was joined by Brad Howard. They honored **Past President Michael Bruck** who recently made a generous donation in honor of his son **Gabe Bruck** to enable him to become a Paul Harris Fellow. Both Brad and **Ruth** thanked **Michael** and also all club members for their generous contributions to the Foundation.

## Rotary International 2027 Convention in Dubai

**Coach Joe** shared that he had heard concerns expressed about the selection of Dubai as the host location for the 2027 Rotary International Convention. He invited Brad Howard to the podium to speak on the issue. Brad said he was there to explain how the choice came about, but not to defend it. He made a point to say he agreed to be the 2027 Convention Chair when he thought the convention would be in his beloved Hawaii, but it turned out the Honolulu Convention Center will still be under construction. Brad then described the process that Rotary International officials undertook to review their alternate choices, which included Barcelona, Berlin, London and Dubai.

After the choice of Dubai was made, the International Organizing Committee received concerns from Rotarians in Canada, the U.S. and elsewhere, which it took seriously but ultimately decided to let the decision on Dubai stand. Dubai is a crossroads of the world and is a city that is growing globally but must deal with its history of repression. Brad noted that 90% of those living in Dubai today are expats and only 10% are Emirati. That population wants to see change, and realizes they need to change if they hope to have global success in the future. Rotary International has a history of going to difficult places to do its humanitarian work, yet it has not held a convention in one. As always,

Casey Farmer – 1 year  
Tammeil Gilkerson – 1 year  
Nikki Lowy – 1 year  
Bill Palmer – 1 year

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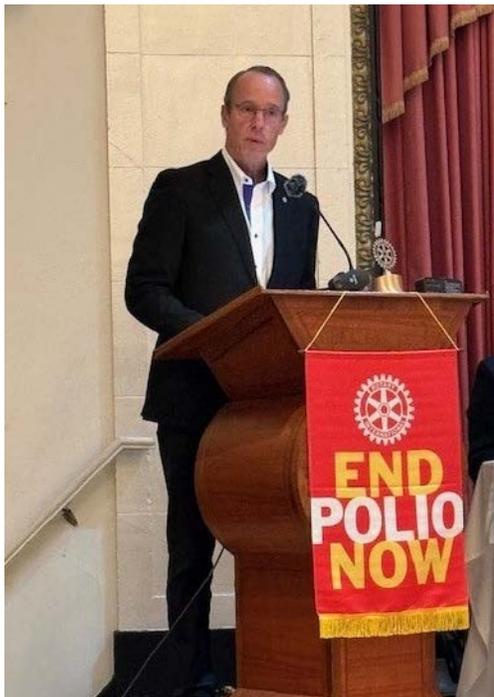
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the convention will be an opportunity to showcase Rotary's ideals, but the Organizing Committee hopes that perhaps in Dubai it will showcase cultures and systems that fall short of them. Additionally, it was felt that the location will give some Rotarians from Africa and South America a chance to attend their first convention. Brad shared these points and the guarantees on safety made by UAE officials on all Rotarians including women and those from the LGBTQA communities. Brad then took a couple questions from the audience, and a cogent position statement from **Randy Arnold**, but time did not permit a full discourse at the meeting. He promised to share Rotarians' concerns with the convention



committee.

## Holiday Party

**Coach Joe** thanked **Fred and Alyston Morse** for hosting the holiday party in their lovely home. He thanked **Ruth Stroup** for catering and the Entertainment Committee for helping to serve. Congratulations to **Jesse Schmidt** for winning the Ugly Sweater Contest. We were all pleased that Mayor Barbara Lee attended the party to share in good cheer.

## St. Vincent de Paul Service Day

**Joe** invited event coordinator **Catherine Coleman** to the podium to share highlights of the December 13<sup>th</sup> Community Service Day at St. Vincent's Community Center. She invited people who attended to share a few words, and it was clear from the comments that all enjoyed volunteering to help over 700 people experience the season of sharing especially the children who played games and won prizes.

## New Home for Oakland Rotary Club

**Coach Joe** explained that after 72 years of our association with the California Ballroom and the related Lemington Hotel, Oakland Rotary

Calendar for registration link.

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was indeed “on the move.” It was turning the page in the new year to a new home – the Henry J. Kaiser Center for the Arts at the southern tip of Lake Merritt near Oakland’s downtown. **Joe** thanked the entire search committee for their hard work over the past few months to introduce choices, schedule our visits and meeting try-outs, and ultimately recommend and negotiate the best option for the club. As we move to our new location with state of the art audiovisual tools, **Joe** heralded the hard work of **Ralph Sklar** in overseeing the AV function and team in the ballroom. He presented him with a Rotary on the Run Medal.



### Speaker for the Day — Mitchell Schwarzer

**Pat Williams** introduced our speaker Mitchell Schwarzer as an architectural historian and professor emeritus who has written 125 articles and four books on city planning, architecture and the built environment. He is the author of *Hellatown: Oakland's History of Development and Disruption*.

Mitchell provided a historical perspective on Oakland’s current situation. Overall it has been one of both gains and losses over many decades. Oakland lost its military base, its industry and its retail since the 1970s. It gained a different population over the years with many more Asian and South American residents moving in. From 2000 until now, Oakland’s losses have included three sports teams and several colleges who left or changed hands, and the loss of major media with the demise of the daily Oakland Tribune. But its gains have included additional residents moving in and leaving the West Bay, and companies like PG&E and Blue Shield relocating here, plus some tech and major nonprofits. So what is keeping Oakland a stellar growing city?

Schwarzer of course notes its crime as a major challenge as well as its limited city budget and resources. But Schwarzer cites the “nimby divide” as a trend in the last 25 years that has stalled redevelopment and

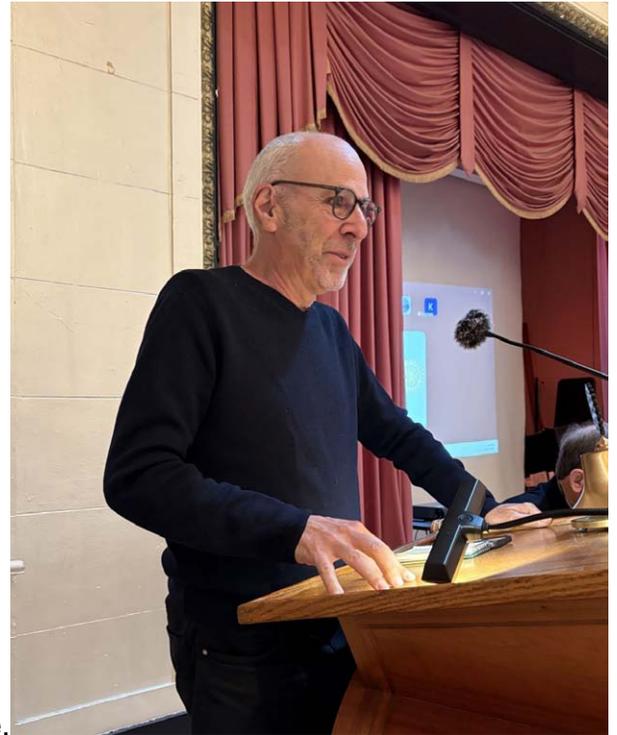
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expansion for fear that the city will lose any hope of being affordable for current populations. With communities organizing to fight anything, it is hard to put forth improvements. Jerry Brown did so when he was mayor, despite those who challenged his plans for new housing construction. It remains to be seen whether the current Mayor Barbara Lee can make an



impact on Oakland's future.

**Coach Joe** thanked Mitchell for his thoughtful presentation and shared that the club has made a generous donation in his name to the End Polio Now Campaign.

### Bellringers

**John and Pam Claassen** rang the bell in honor of their son Nicholas for having graduated recently from San Jose State University.

**Ruth Stroup, Shannon Hackley, Dudley Thompson** and **Joe Goralka** rang the bell in honor of **Ralph Sklar**.

**Keith Uriarte** rang the bell.

### Donation in Memory of Robert Peltz

Oakland Rotary Endowment recently received a donation in memory of **Robert Peltz** from Alvin Hom. The Endowment is one of several charities designated by the Peltz Family for donations, in lieu of flowers. Thank you Mr. Hom for your gift.

### Adjourn

**Coach Joe** thanked all who participated in the meeting and wished everyone Happy Holidays, with a reminder that we have no meetings for the next two weeks -- enjoy time with friends and family! He adjourned the meeting at 1:30 pm