

Rotary

Club of Oakland



Speakers

October 1
Cristy Johnston
-Limon

October 8
Clifford Stoll

October 15
Linda Shively

October 22
Dr. Emil Kakkis

Special Events

Rotary Golf Tournament

Sept. 22 – 12 noon
Tilden Park Golf
Course

Port of Oakland Harbor Tour

Sept. 25
Tour sold out
7 – 8:30 pm Post
Tour Reception
at Scott's Seafood

Rotary Halloween Party

October 29
Chapel of the Chimes

Service Projects

SOS Meals on Wheels

Sept. 28 – 9:15 -11:30 am
Contact Karen
Friedman for



Next Club Meeting - October 1, 2026 - Cristy Johnston Limon

Rotary will not meet next week at the Henry Kaiser Center. The September 25th Meeting is an offsite Port of Oakland Harbor Tour from 5:15-7 pm and is currently sold out. However, all Rotarians can join in fellowship and cocktails after the tour at Scott's Seafood in Jack London Square.

October 1st Rotary Meeting – Past President David Stein announced we will begin the new month by returning to the Henry Kaiser Center for the Arts for lunch and to hear from Rotarian **Cristy Johnston-Limon**, City of Oakland Deputy Director of Economic and Workforce Development. **Cristy** will provide a first-year progress report on the city's 5-Year Economic Development Plan. Fellowship begins at noon with the meeting starting at 12:30 pm.



information

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday!

Celebrating are:

September

01 – Ali Medina

05 – Syd Saperstein

06 – Vera Hannush

07 – Nikki Lowy

08 – Dominique Enriquez

08 – Marlo Seligman

09 – Carey Clausen

10 – Nancy O'Malley

13 – Anne Marks

17 – Janice Brickley

17 – Susan Smith

19 – Leslie Hilger

20 – Fred Morse

21 – Greg Gilbert

22 – Trisha Connors

24 – Erich Harris

24 – Wil Hobbs

25 – Sam Davis

27 – Ricka White

29 – Jesse Schmidt

Membership Anniversaries

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

September

Wayne Goodroe – 42

years

Shanna O'Hare – 32 years

Johanna Leonard – 28

years

Rosemary Darden – 24

years

Ginni Ring – 20 years

Keri Butkevich – 11 years

Alex Kaffka – 10 years

Ed Brail – 5 years

Erich Harris – 3 years

Ryan Bates – 1 year

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 September 17, 2026

Call to Order

President Merlin Edwards called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm and welcomed everyone.

Visiting Rotarians and Guests

Pres. Merlin invited introductions by visiting Rotarians and guests. Richard Goldstein was visiting from Livermore Valley Rotary Club.

Stephanie Casenza, Keith Uriarte introduced their guests. **Past President Carla Betts** introduced Brian Wong, son of our speaker. Guest speaker Shirley Kazuyo Muramoto introduced her husband, Bob Wong.

Thought for the Day – Donald Sheppard

Donald Sheppard shared a quote from Salvation Army Founder William Booth about the importance of fighting against adversity of all types, in favor of the light of God. All good words in these challenging times.

Announcements

Gala and Club Service Chairs Needed: **President Merlin** is seeking a skilled organizer and fundraiser to serve as the club's 2027 Gala Chair for our most important annual fundraiser. He is also seeking a Community Engagement Chair who can help organize our club's participation in community service events such as helping St. Vincent de Paul client events, supporting child field trips and participating in work events at local parks. It's a great way for new members to meet and get to know other Rotarians so if you are someone who likes to organize activities, **Merlin** would like to hear from you if interested in either important role.

Rotary Halloween Party: the club will once again ensure a howling good time at its October 29 Halloween Party at Oakland's Chapel of the Chimes hosted by **Ed Brail**. Costumes are encouraged and new this year, will be awards for both adult *and* children costumes. Come and enjoy a boo-tiful evening!

No Political Solicitation Reminder: It is the policy of the Rotary Club to remain apolitical in all its proceedings and communications with club members. Therefore any use of its membership lists for political purposes is strictly prohibited. Please comply everyone!

Rotary International 2027 Conference: **Merlin** wants us all to know that

registration for the 2027 Oakland Rotary Convention in Barcelona Spain is now open. He underscored that early registration is prudent to save some bucks. The \$595 rate rises soon to \$785 and again rises in March, 2027. All are encouraged to attend for the international experience.

District 5170 Leadership Training Meeting: Closer to home, the District Leadership Conference slated for September 19 in San Jose has 20 club members registered so far, with room for 30 members total. The club is covering costs for those wishing to participate.

Rotary Constitution: A vote will be held at the October 15 club meeting to approve changes to the Rotary Constitution. Details were emailed recently to all members for review.

New Member – William Middlebrooks

Keith Uriarte introduced new member **William Middlebrooks** as a dedicated educator, mentor and the Deputy Athletic Director and men's basketball coach at Lincoln University in Oakland. He graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Arizona and has enjoyed a long career in education. **William** is a proud father of three children and grandfather to five. **Pres. Merlin** presented him with his new badge, Rotary pin, new member packet and hat. Welcome, **William**!



Fellowship Follies

Merlin arranged a fun fellowship time-out by leaving a questionnaire at each table for occupants to solve. Much fun ensued before the answers were revealed:

Northernmost Rotary Club in the world: Longyearbyen, Norway

Southernmost Rotary Club: Puerto Williams, Chile

Three largest Rotary Clubs: Vijayawada, India (760); Seoul-Gabgseo, Korea (599) Birmingham, AL (600+)

Clubs with the most female members: Nauru, South Pacific (100%); Lesotho, Africa (71%); Gibraltar, GB (67%)

Top Location for Global Grant Projects: India (2,936 grants to date!)

Speaker for the Day – Shirley Kazuyo Muramoto

Suzi Yokomizo introduced our speaker as someone whom she first met when they were both children studying the Japanese language at the Buddhist Temple in Oakland. Since then Shirley Kazuyo Muramoto has become a renowned Japanese Koto musician and teacher. She was pleased to share her story and talents with her Rotary audience. The Koto is a traditional 13-stringed zither and has become the national instrument of Japan since it was first introduced in the Eighth Century, C.E. Traditional Kotos are about 6 feet in length and made from kiri wood. Shirley was first taught Koto by her mother and has been playing the Koto for over 50 years, including teaching others how to play for four decades.

Shirley's presentation to Rotary included the incredible background of how this instrument was a key part of the Japanese internment experience, as that is where her mother first learned to play. Of course, there was no sheet music in either the Park Mountain or Topaz Utah camps. But they did their best. After the war, there was a great push for Japanese citizens to assimilate and there are likely as many as five generations that do not know the Koto or other Japanese customs. Shirley hopes to correct that with her teaching and appearances, and she is in demand at institutions such as the Oakland Museum where she was scheduled to play later in the afternoon after her appearance at Rotary.

Before closing her remarks, Shirley wonderfully performed a traditional "Cherry Blossoms" piece as well as the Doris Day classic "Sentimental Journey." She also shared photos of the early times of performances during and after the war. Shirley generously took questions from the audience. She was thanked by **Merlin** and by tremendous applause.

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Bellringers

Tom Limon rang the bell because he had just learned from table-mate **Stewart Epstein** that Brooklyn West Winery won first place for its sparkling wine in a Best Champagne in America Competition, one of the longest running competitions

nationwide. Also ringing the bell for **Stewart** were **Shannon Hackley**, **Ralph Sklar** and **Keith Uriarte**.

Marissa Betts rang the bell for our speaker Shirley and her family.

Adjournment

President Merlin adjourned the meeting at 1:30 pm.