

# Rotary Club of Oakland



## Club Meetings

February 26  
Rotary Speech Contest

March 5  
Maria Bonneville  
California Institute  
for Regenerative  
Medicine

March 12  
UCB Chancellor  
Rich Lyons

## Service Projects

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

**Tree Planting Service  
Day**  
Feb. 28 – with Oakland  
Parks & Recreation Fdn

## Special Events

**Oakland Fledglings  
Bird Walk for  
Beginners**  
Mar. 8 – 9 am  
More info to come

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

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

## Next Club Meeting – February 26, 2026 – Speech Contest

**Bill Swartz** announced next week's meeting will feature the three local high school finalists in the Annual Speech Contest. They will each present a speech focused on Rotary's Four-Way Test. The winner will move on to Area level to compete in Rotary District 5170's Richard D. King Youth Speech Contest.

We will meet at Henry J. Kaiser Center for the Arts for fellowship at 12:00 pm followed by the meeting which starts at 12:30 pm. 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 February 19, 2026

### Call to Order

On a sunny winter's day following days of heavy rain, Oakland Rotary members gathered in near-record numbers for good fellowship, club business and an outstanding speaker in the form of our newly elected 12<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congressional District Representative, the Honorable Lateefah Simon. **President Joe Goralka (aka Coach Joe)** officially called the meeting to order.

### Visiting Rotarians and Guests

President **Joe** welcomed everyone and invited introductions from visiting Rotarians and guests.

Visiting Rotarians included Martha Goralka, charter president of the Delta-Antioch Rotary Club, Past President and current member of the Truckee Club **Jon Gresley**, and **Jim Bell**, District 5170 Assistant Governor and member of the Niles Rotary Club of Fremont.

**John Claassen** introduced Raya Zion, Workforce Development Officer at Laney College and our liaison for the new Rotaract Club at Laney.

**Mack McFadden** introduced Lauren Greenberg with local nonprofit Youth Alive.

**Barbara Beery** introduced John Knox.

**Stew Epstein** introduced Mimi Rohr, a communications consultant and campaign

## Committee Meetings

### DEI

Feb. 23 – 5 – 6 pm

### Membership

Feb 25 – 5 – 6 pm

### Community Service

Mar. 4 – 5 – 6 pm

### Speakers

Mar. 4 – 7 – 8 pm

### Karl Stucki World Community Service

Mar. 10 – 5:00 – 6:30 pm

### Business Development

Mar. 10 – 5 – 6 pm

### Fun, Sport, Cultural And Adventure

Mar. 11 – 6 – 7 pm

## Birthday Greetings

### Happy Birthday!

Celebrating are:

February

02 – Kittie Adams

02 – Maren Amdal

02 – Sarah Chavez-Yoell

02 – Isa Chu

02 – Warren Chu

02 – Jill Loh Kearns

02 – Lesley Weaver

07 – Stephanie Bolden

09 – Karen Friedman

13 – Ahmad Anderson

14 – Catherine Coleman

15 – Aaron Smith

16 – Charlie Adams

17 – Nancy Williams

24 – Linda Bradford

27 – Derek Barnes

27 – Keith Uriarte

## Membership

manager. **Moya Robinson** introduced Julian Schaefer.

**Keith Uriarte** introduced his neighbor Ellen Luellen, founder of LionShare CoWork.

**Ali Medina** introduced Amy Chou with the Oakland Museum. Capt. Julius Murphy of the Salvation Army was also introduced as the organization's new area manager.

**President-Elect Merlin Edwards** introduced Val Louis, Vice President at EBMUD and Charlie Deterline as Executive Director of SOS Meals on Wheels.

## Thought for the Day and Pledge of Allegiance

**Kathleen Uribe** shared an insightful quote from James Michener about the value of mingling both work and play, mind and body, in order to best master the art of living. She then led us in the Pledge of Allegiance in honor of President's Day.

## Meeting Sponsor – Patricia Wells

**Patricia Wells** was pleased to celebrate the work involved in public service at the Oakland Housing Authority. Its mission is to ensure the availability of quality housing for the people of Oakland and to offer much more. Besides providing housing, the Authority is involved in elder care, workforce development, education, and many community activities. This past year 34,000 people were served and the agency provided housing vouchers to 15,000 people. It also began building over 2,300 affordable homes in new housing developments. They serve elders, veterans, children, the disabled and families of all sizes. **Patricia** saluted the many people who work at the agency as dedicated servant leaders and acknowledged her mentor **Jon Gresley** who retired from the agency but is still a consultant.

## Black History Month Report

**Coach Joe** reported a good time was had by all last week at Rotary's "field trip" to the Oakland Museum to see a special exhibit during Black History Month. "*Black Spaces: Reclaim and Rename*" navigates the braided histories of displacement, resistance and resilience within Bay Area Black American Communities. The exhibit can be seen through March 5 - don't miss it!

## New Member Inductions – Caitlin Levinstrong, Jeanette Wong and Jenny Rauh

Three new Rotarians were welcomed and inducted at the meeting. They include: **Caitlin Levinstrong**, Executive Director of Oakland Goes Outdoors, who was sponsored by **Danny Wan**. She is leading this new organization and its work in partnership with Oakland Unified School District to help youth obtain meaningful outdoor experiences. **Caitlin** herself enjoys open spaces and in particular places near open water.

New member **Jeanette Wong** was introduced by sponsor **Vera Hannush** as the new Public Affairs Director at Alameda Health System. **Jeanette** was born and raised in Oakland and has a long career in public service. Two interesting facts

## Anniversaries

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

February

Ken Richardson – 43 years

Joel Parrott – 40 years

Shannon Hackley – 38 years

Sean Marx – 33 years

Rick Baskin – 21 years

Bob Breecker – 14 years

Emily Morgan – 9 years

Bryan Morgan – 9 years

Isaac Kos-Read – 8 years

Pauline Fox – 6 years

Sam Miller – 6 years

Ed Silva – 5 years

Nancy Williams – 5 years

Ama Torrance – 4 years

Nuno Ferreira – 2 years

Odalys Ordonez – 2 years

Bob Lee – 1 year

Mack McFadden – 1 year

Yesenia Sanchez – 1 year

among many: **Vera** shared that she speaks three languages (English, Chinese and German) and was once in an MC Hammer Video! (No word yet on her dance moves.)

**Past President Shannon Hackley** introduced new member and good friend **Jennifer “Jenny” Rauh**. **Jenny** is Business Development Director at WhereWeFly, a company involved in creating and offering interactive 3D mapping, flight data and trip planning to airports. **Jenny** lives in San Leandro and is a motorcycle enthusiast, according to **Shannon**.



## Past Presidents Day

**Past President Shannon Hackley** introduced a new meeting feature offering words of wisdom by past presidents of the club. **Roger Huddleston** is a 44-year club member and the youngest president of the club when he was installed in 1992. He shared his experience welcoming the first women members and recalled his experience hosting a Rotary trip through the south of France including 5 new female club members. **Roger** is proud of the club's subsequent work to embrace diversity both racially and culturally. His advice to new members is to get involved in taking service trips internationally with Rotary.

**Jack McAboy** was president of the club in 1993 and is proud of the club's youth development services. He joined the club in 1975 and has remained very active through the years until only recently due to the illness and recent passing of his wife. **Jack** said he is very grateful for the outpouring of support from the entire club membership during this difficult time. He noted how such support only comes from the strong bonds and friendships developed from being active in the Rotary Club. Apparently embracing “service above self” brings special dividends in times of



need.

### Speaker for the Day – Congresswoman Lateefah Simon

Club member and retired nonprofit executive **Bob Harris** proudly introduced the 12<sup>th</sup> District U.S. Congresswoman Lateefah Simon. She is someone he has known for many years since she first became active in the Bay Area community. Lateefah now holds the seat previously held for years by current Mayor Barbara Lee, who early on strongly endorsed Lateefah as her replacement. Lateefah was born in San Francisco, received a Bachelor of Arts in public policy at Mills College, a Master of Public Administration from the University of San Francisco, and was a 2014 Social Entrepreneurs-in-Residence Fellow at Stanford University. Prior to winning her election she was active in the community and served on the BART Board and as Executive Director of the Akonadi Foundation.

Lateefah outlined her legislative appointments and priorities. She has advocated for a federal jobs guarantee, a national minimum wage of at least \$15 per hour, universal health care, expanded union protections, and strengthened safety-net programs such as Medicaid and food assistance. Lateefah serves on the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, the main investigative committee of the United States House of Representatives. The committee's broad jurisdiction and legislative authority make it one of the most influential and powerful panels in the House. Its chair is one of only three in the House with the authority to issue subpoenas without a committee vote or consultation with the ranking member. Its focus is broad-reaching and increasingly so in the first year of the second term of President Donald J. Trump.

After taking questions from the audience, **Coach Joe** thanked her for her service and her presentation, noting that a donation had been made in her honor to the Rotary End Polio Now Campaign.



## Announcements

**Catherine Coleman** invited club members to sign up for a Tree Planting Service Day on February 28th. She noted that Oakland has lost 40% of its tree canopy and the club will be making an impact to replace some of it in West Oakland. Sign up online or give **Catherine** a call, even if you can only push a broom or spread mulch rather than dig a hole.

**John Claassen** announced a Job Fair sponsored by the new Rotaract Club at Laney College will be on March 4th. He thanked Raya Zion for assisting in this activity.

Speech Contest Chair **Bill Swartz** announced next week's meeting will feature our Rotary Speech Contest. Three applicants are competing after being selected from among more than 15 applications. **Bill** noted that the volume of applications spiked after making visits to various high schools to promote the event. So he contacted other local clubs to gauge their interest, and Piedmont Rotary Club and San Leandro Rotary Club agreed to host their own speech contests.

**Coach Joe** presented a surprised **Bill** with a Rotary on the Run Medal in honor of his hard work and outstanding results in exponentially promoting youth development through speech, all in his first year as a new Rotarian!

## Bellringers

**Alex Poulsen** rang the bell twice, for **Jack McAboy** and **Roger Huddlestone**.  
**Joe Goralka** rang the bell for **Jack McAboy** and **Roger Huddlestone**.

**Elida Scola, Rosemary Darden** and **Ahmad Anderson** rang the bell for **Jack McAboy**.

**Bill Swartz** rang the bell twice: for **Barbara Beery** and the 11 Rotarians who are helping with the Speech Contest.

Martha Goralka rang the bell in honor of her and **Joe's** 33<sup>rd</sup> Wedding Anniversary. In turn, **Joe** rang the bell in honor of Martha's birthday this week.

**Patricia Wells** rang the bell for **Jon Gresley** who introduced her to the club.

**Sam Davis, Linda Hamilton, Nuno Ferreira** and **Pam Claassen** rang the bell in honor of Congresswoman Lateefah Simon.

**Pam Claassen** also rang the bell to honor the club's past presidents.

**Lorna Padia Marcus** rang the bell to thank **Catherine Coleman** for the gift of planting a garden at Lorna's new restaurant PJ's.

### **Adjourn**

**Coach Joe** invited everyone to the back of the room to personally welcome our three new members, and then officially adjourned the meeting at 1:34 pm.