

# the HELICOPTER



The Rotary Club of Pensacola District 6940 Club 4248

## WEEK IN REVIEW 2/17/2026

### A Taste of Spring at the Waterfront

There was a distinct hint of spring in the air as **Downtown Rotarians** gathered at the Pensacola Yacht Club this week. The breezy waterfront setting provided the perfect backdrop for an afternoon of lunch, networking, and the unique camaraderie that defines our club.

The energy was high from the jump, thanks to our dedicated raffle ticket hawkers **Ed Wonders** and **Margaret Stopp**, who worked the room with their usual flair. Meanwhile, our official greeters, **Meredith Bush** and **Kia Goldsmith**, ensured that every member and guest felt the warm hospitality of the Downtown Rotary from the moment they stepped through the door.

President **Allison** gaveled the meeting to order with authority and invited **Randall Richardson** to the podium to lead the club in a thoughtful prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Club Announcements & Member News

- **Thinking of Dale:** Please keep Dale Jordan in your thoughts and prayers as he recovers from a recent health scare. We are very encouraged to report that Dale is on the mend; we look forward to his return to our weekly gatherings very soon.
- **New Member Welcome:** A hearty Rotary welcome to our newest member, **Rachael Hendrix**! Rachael was formally introduced by Randall Richardson, and we are absolutely thrilled to have her energy and expertise added to our ranks.
- **Paul Harris Fellow:** A major milestone for one of our own—President Allison recognized **Meredith Bush** for receiving her first **Paul Harris Fellow** recognition. Thank you, Meredith, for your generous commitment to “Service Above Self.”
- **Service & Training Opportunities:** \* **Manna Food Bank:** We have a hands-on service opportunity tomorrow, **February 21st**. It's a great way to put our mission into motion.
  - **Regional Support:** Let's support our neighbors! Keep an eye out for March events from other Rotary clubs, specifically the **Gumbo Cook-off** hosted by the Gulf Breeze club.
  - **Rotary Leadership Institute (RLI):** For those looking to deepen their leadership skills, a training session is scheduled for **February 28th**.
- **Global Impact – Matching Grant for India:** **Kathy Horton** and **Ted Brown** have stepped up with a generous challenge. They will match up to **\$1,500** in donations toward

HPV vaccinations for young women in India. This is a life-changing international effort—please reach out to Ted or Kathy to learn how your contribution can be doubled.

### Sunshine & Stakes

**Joe Vinson** stepped in as a “stand-in” for the Sunshine report. Joe skillfully shared fascinating historical tidbits before recognizing our guests and the week's birthday recipients. Unfortunately, none of the birthday celebrants were in attendance to hear our vocal talents, so the club was spared (or perhaps robbed) of an off-key rendition of “Happy Birthday!”

In the raffle, the stakes continue to climb. **Olivia McNally** held the lucky ticket this week, but the Joker remained hidden in the deck. The pot will be over the **\$500 mark** next week.

### Program Highlight: Sheriff Chip Simmons

Our own **Olivia McNally** introduced a guest who is a familiar face to everyone in the room: **Sheriff Chip Simmons**. With a distinguished career beginning as a PPD officer in 1984, the Sheriff has served as Pensacola Police Chief and Assistant County Administrator before his election as Sheriff in 2021 and subsequent re-election in 2024.

### Key Takeaways from the Sheriff's Address:

- **Crime Trends:** Sheriff Simmons delivered an engaging update on the significant reduction in overall crime rates across both the City and the County, credit he shared with his dedicated staff.
- **The Role of Technology:** A long-time proponent of modern tools, the Sheriff discussed his history of implementing body cameras and his current focus on a central command center that monitors integrated camera feeds to solve and prevent crime in real-time.
- **The “Two E's”:** His operational philosophy rests on **Enforcement** and **Engagement**. He stressed that while stopping crime is paramount, engaging with the community is the only way to maintain long-term trust and safety.
- **Recruitment Excellence:** As Escambia County's population grows, the Sheriff is aiming to expand the force from 475 to 500 sworn officers, emphasizing a culture where officers feel supported and choose to make the department their career home.

The presentation concluded with a lively Q&A session covering high-speed pursuit protocols and the department's collaborative working relationship with federal agencies like DHS and ICE.

**Adjourned: 1:00 PM**

**Respectfully Submitted, Clark Merritt**

## 2025-2026 Club Officers

• President	Allison Hill
• Immediate Past President	Henry Roberts
• President Elect	Judy Bense
• Secretary	Jane White
• Treasurer	Lori Nesmith

## Bulletin Information

Web Site: [Pensacolarotaryclub.org](http://Pensacolarotaryclub.org)  
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## Clubs Available for Makeup

Five Flags	Pensacola Bay Center	Mon.	12:00 pm
Gulf Breeze	Legends at Andrews Institute	Tues.	7:00 am
Milton	The Hangar Restaurant	Tues.	12:00 pm
Seville	Seville Quarter	Tues.	5:15 pm
	meets every other Tuesday		
Cantonment	St. Luke's United Methodist Church	Wed.	12:15 pm
Perdido	The Point Church	Wed.	7:30 am
Pace	Stonebrook Village Country Club	Thur.	7:00 am
Cordova	Gulf Coast Kid's House	Thur.	7:00 am
Suburban West	Pensacola Yacht Club	Thur.	12:00 pm
Navarre	Broussard's Cajun Restaurant	Fri.	12:00 pm
Pensacola North	Hancock Bank, Creighton Rd.	Fri.	12:00 pm

## District Governor

Andre Boyd  
<http://www.rotary6940.org>

## Assistant District Governor

Cliff Schornak

## Whats Happening in Rotary

To increase the membership of our club, we will continue to offer three free lunches for potential new members.

**Promote your business by placing an ad in the Helicopter.** Your ad will run for a full month each week. Business card-sized ads are \$25.00, a 1/4 page is \$50.00, and a 1/2-page ad is \$75.00. To place your ad, send the prepared document to [cbridwell@pensacolarotaryclub.org](mailto:cbridwell@pensacolarotaryclub.org) stating the size of the ad you wish to place. **Proceeds benefit the Rotary Club of Pensacola Foundation.**

To pay your quarterly Rotary Club dues with a credit card/debit card go to <http://www.pensacolarotaryclub.org/payment>. Please note that a service charge will be applied to your payment.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Birthdays for the week of  
February 24 through March 2

**Frank Beall** - Born in Dothan, AL in Rotary 58 years,  
Paul Harris Fellow+1

**Lindsay Durre** - Born in Pensacola, FL in Rotary 15 years

**Lee Elebash** - Born in Pensacola, FL in Rotary 12 Years,  
Paul Harris Fellow

**Don Haferkamp** - Born in LaPorte, IN, in Rotary 24 years,  
Paul Harris Fellow+2

**Marco Medici** - Born in Sassuolo, Emilia-Romagna, Italy,  
in Rotary 14 years, Paul Harris Fellow+2

**Scott Sallis** - Born in Springdale, AR in Rotary 16 years,  
Paul Harris Fellow

## Greeters and Ticket Sales

### February 24

Greeters: John Clancy, Jack Williams  
Ticket Sales: Al Coby, Dennis Connoly

### March 3

Greeters: Carmen Cuneo, David Delgallo  
Ticket Sales: Madison Currin, Gary Dennis

## Prayer/Pledge And Sunshine

### February 24

Prayer & Pledge: Henry Roberts      Sunshine: Susan O'Connor

### March 3

Prayer & Pledge: Terry Scruggs      Sunshine: Rob Overton

## Meeting Schedule

### February

24 - Noon Regular Weekly Meeting at Pensacola Yacht Club

### March

3 - Noon Regular Weekly Meeting at Pensacola Yacht Club  
10 - Noon Regular Weekly Meeting at Pensacola Yacht Club  
17 - Noon Regular Weekly Meeting at Pensacola Yacht Club  
24 - Noon Regular Weekly Meeting at Pensacola Yacht Club  
1:00 - Board of Directors Meeting  
31 - Noon Regular Weekly Meeting at Pensacola Yacht Club

## Program Schedule

### February

24 - Judge Charles Kahn, President-Elect Nominee

### March

3 - Marco Medici - 20 Year Immigration Adventure  
9 - TBA  
16 - TBA  
24 - Stacey Kostevicki, Gulf Coast Kid's House  
31 - Connie Bookman, Pathway for Change