

the HELICOPTER



The Rotary Club of Pensacola District 6940 Club 4248

WEEK IN REVIEW 3/17/2026

Past President Henry called the meeting to order on St. Patrick's Day at 12:13 PM.

Approximately 42 members recited the Four-Way Test, followed by the Prayer and Pledge led by Charlie Sherrill Jr.

Rotarian Mike reminded the club of the opportunity to volunteer for the Pace Center for Girls Men Who Cook charity event, which will take place on April 19, 2026.

Rotarian Joe invited members to participate in upcoming fundraisers supporting Gulf Coast Kids House. He highlighted the annual Passport to Pensacola event, where for \$75 participants receive a passport to visit participating restaurants and breweries along 12th Avenue and enjoy featured specials. He also shared information about a Diaper Distribution initiative supporting local families. In addition, a cocktail fundraiser is scheduled for April 30, featuring heavy appetizers, beer, and wine. Members were encouraged to support these efforts and participate in the upcoming events.

Past President Henry thanked Rotarians Mike and Joe for their announcements and reminded members that applications are currently being accepted for new grants to support community activities. The jackpot of \$611 will continue to grow next week.

He then introduced Rotarian and architect Scott, who assisted with the redesign of an educational building in Brownsville that now serves more than 100 individuals. Sunshine Sallis welcomed eight visitors and recognized three Rotarian birthdays. He shared remarks celebrating the Pensacola community and highlighted milestones across downtown and the beach.

Rotarian Olivia introduced guest speaker Jackie Gheen of Ballet Pensacola. Ms. Gheen is a longtime supporter and leader within the organization and has played an active role in advancing its mission of arts education, community engagement, and regional impact.

Gheen shared an overview of Ballet Pensacola and emphasized that the organization is much more than its well-known production of The Nutcracker. She explained that Ballet Pensacola serves as both an educational pipeline and a contributor to the local economy, while strengthening community identity and cultural assets in Pensacola. She noted that the organization began in 1978 as Kaleidoscope Dance Theatre and has grown into a two-part organization consisting of a professional company and an academy. The academy serves more than 300 students ranging from age three through adulthood. The professional company

includes 17 dancers from across the United States and abroad, including performers from Pakistan and Colombia. Ballet Pensacola remains the only resident professional ballet company in Northwest Florida.

Gheen described the student company, which includes approximately 20 advanced academy dancers who participate in productions throughout the year. She also highlighted the organization's extensive outreach efforts, including visits to schools, libraries, and hospitals, as well as performances at community events and regional venues such as Seaside and Biloxi. Ballet Pensacola reaches more than 20,000 individuals annually through performances and programming. She explained that participation in the arts helps students build confidence, discipline, teamwork, and creativity, all of which are valuable in the workforce. She also noted that ballet requires a high level of physical performance comparable to competitive sports.

Ms. Gheen provided an update on the current season, which runs from July through June. Performances have included Dracula, The Nutcracker, and a recent production set to Vivaldi's Four Seasons. The season will conclude with Romeo and Juliet, scheduled for April 16 through April 19. Each production is paired with special events that enhance audience engagement and support fundraising efforts.

She also shared data on the economic impact of the arts. Nationally, the arts generate significant economic activity and employment. At the local level, she noted that arts organizations play an important role in Pensacola's tourism economy by providing activities for visitors beyond the beach. Ballet Pensacola alone contributes an estimated \$700,000 annually in local spending from audience members, excluding ticket sales. The organization also supports local businesses by hiring musicians, technicians, designers, photographers, and other service providers.

Ms. Gheen discussed current challenges facing the arts, including recent reductions in public funding at the state level and potential federal funding changes. She noted that these pressures can affect programming, outreach, and affordability, and emphasized the importance of community partnerships and local support. She concluded by encouraging members to attend performances, advocate for the arts, and support organizations like Ballet Pensacola through engagement and leadership.

Past President Roberts thanked Ms. Gheen for her presentation and for her contributions to the cultural and economic vitality of the Pensacola community.

Meeting adjourned at 12:56pm.

Minutes submitted by Nicole

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ROTARY

Today, March 24, we meet at Pensacola Yacht Club.

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 lelias@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.

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
E-Mail: cbridwell@pensacolarotaryclub.org
Chris Bridwell, Executive Secretary
13 Palafox Place, Suite 200
P.O. Box 528•Pensacola, FL 32591-0528
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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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Birthdays for the week of
March 24 through March 30

Stacy Robello – born in Memphis, TN, in Rotary 6 years

Carmen Cuneo – born in Morristown, NJ, in Rotary 17 years,
Paul Harris Fellow +8

Sophia Forsley – born in Thessaloniki, Greece in Rotary
1 year

Greeters and Ticket Sales

March 24

Greeters: Richard Forsley, Sally Fox
Ticket Sales: Sophia Forsley, Laura Gilliam

March 31

Greeters: Nicole Gislason, Johnathan Griffin
Ticket Sales: Kis Goldsmith, Scott Grisset

Prayer/Pledge And Sunshine

March 24

Prayer/Pledge: David Stafford Sunshine: Martha Saunders

March 31

Prayer & Pledge: Charles Thornton Sunshine: John Shaffer

Meeting Schedule

March

- 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

March

- 24 - Stacey Kostevicki, Gulf Coast Kid's House
- 31 - Connie Bookman, Pathway for Change