
Rotary

Club of Pasadena, CA

SPOKES NEWSLETTER

DISTRICT 5300 * Rotary Club 794 * February 21, 2025 * #01-005
www.pasadenarotary.com

MICHAEL LAMB

Professor of Geology, Caltech
"The Science of Post-Wildfire Debris Flows"

Introducer: Jim Osterling



Michael Lamb is a professor of geology in the Division of Geological and Planetary Sciences at Caltech. Lamb's research is on the processes that form and shape landscapes over geologic time. He has studied how wildfires shape our local mountains, land building by river deltas in the face of sea level rise, and thawing Arctic floodplains.

He also studies ancient water-rich environments on Mars as a team member on the NASA rovers Curiosity and Perseverance.

He received his B.S. in Geology and Geophysics from the University of Minnesota, M.S. in Oceanography from the University of Washington, and PhD in Earth Science from U.C.

Berkeley.

He has been on the faculty at Caltech for 16 years. This presentation will summarize information from a recent Caltech Watson Lecture, viewable on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8_xPU5epJde-Z37yHrap6ix3ZKHT0v6g

WEDNESDAY – FEBRUARY 26, 2025
UNIVERSITY CLUB OF PASADENA - 12:00 pm
175 N. Oakland Ave, Pasadena 91101
RSVP A MUST - Deadline: 5:00 pm MONDAY

OVERFLOW PARKING: Pasadena Heritage Blinn House

Enter parking off Madison Ave. - Do not park in any reserved parking space

Reception: Alan Schier & Mike Bernard

Lunchtime Interlude: Ann Louise Christensen

Song Leader: Phil Miles

Inspiration: Jim Graunke

Scout Zone Reporter: Dean Billman

Photographer: PP Ken Joe & Gui Bittencourt

Technical: Frank Fish & Scott Carlson

Sergeant At Arms: Robert Lyons

Non-members are welcome - \$45.00 includes lunch

ZOOM is back and opens at 12:15 pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86515101523?pwd=dHhNZnV5c2ZqbzNQbWthbDNhYTladz09>

Meeting ID: 865 1510 1523. - Passcode: 667356

Simply Stephen Smith's Spokes Speaks



Rotary Foundation Trustee Chair Mark Maloney led a Rotary International delegation joining more than 56,000 participants at the 29th United Nations climate conference in Baku, Azerbaijan in November 2024. Delegates at COP29 (short for Conference of the Parties) came from 193 countries and thousands of nongovernmental organizations, companies, and media.

The high-level delegation at COP29, appointed by Rotary International president Stephanie Urchick, showcased Rotary's continued commitment to protecting the environment. Rotary delegates aimed to build on prior successes by connecting with organizations that align with Rotary's focus on the environment and finding possible partners for future projects.

In 2024, Rotary announced [a strategic partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme](#) that empowered members of Rotary, Rotaract, and Interact clubs to adopt bodies of water. The partnership provides guidance from UNEP's experts, step-by-step instructions, and other resources.

The United Nations climate change conferences are the organization's largest annual meetings, and among the largest international meetings in the world. The conferences serve as opportunities for the governments involved in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (the "parties" in "Conference of the Parties") to negotiate ways to address climate change and measure the progress they've made so far. This was the fourth Rotary delegation to attend the UN climate conference.

COP30 will be held in Belém, Brazil, in November 2025. Brazil is the home country of RI's 2025-26 president, Mário César Martins de Camargo.

As Pasadena Rotarians, let's set an example for other clubs in our District to be conscious of the environment and take constructive action in the health of our planet.

Stephen D. Smith
President 2024 - 2025
Rotary Club of Pasadena
Cell 310.908.1779

**ATTENDING THE MEETING -
MEALS & SEATING ARE
PROVIDED BASED ON RSVP'S WE
RECEIVE**

BUFFET LUNCH by Chef Tony Lu

**CLICK HERE TO
RSVP TODAY**

Please **RSVP** if you are attending!
office@pasadenarotary.com



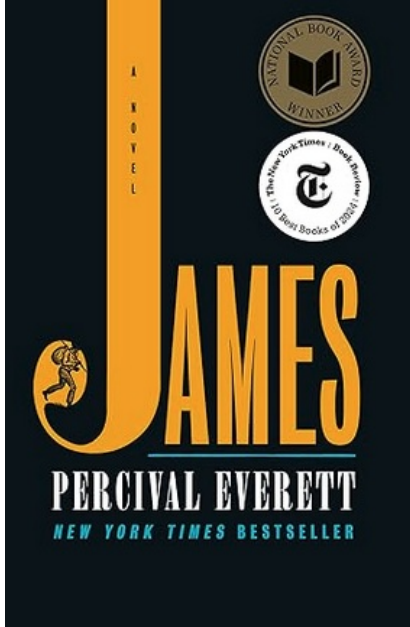
ROTARY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS

ROTARY READERS

Rotary Readers will meet via **Zoom** on
March 3rd at 6 pm


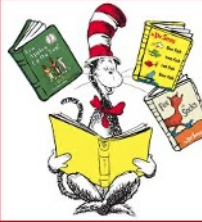
Jan Sanders will lead us in the discussion of
James by Percival Everett. James is
Pasadena's One City Story and the author will
review his book on March 15 at Pasadena
Presbyterian Church.

For more information and to RSVP, please contact



**BE A...
GUEST READER!!!**

**Washington Elementary STEM
Magnet**
Invites you into TK - 5th Grade
Classrooms
In-Person Reader



**Read Across
America Day**

Thursday
March 6th

Anytime between
8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
15 - 20 min Reading Block



Email or Call
Ms. Debbie
*To Schedule A Class
Appointment*



afsharian.datevik@pusd.us
(626) 396-5840 Ext 75042



Facilitators Needed: RYLA 2025 at Camp Cedar Crest!

The Rotary Club of Pasadena seeks volunteers for our Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) event:
Date: March 21-23, 2025

Location: Camp Cedar Crest, Running Springs, CA

Help shape young leaders! We need enthusiastic individuals to facilitate sessions, coordinate activities, and support logistics. No special skills required - just a passion for youth development.

Enjoy a weekend in the mountains while making a difference.

Contact our RYLA committee co-chairs - **Dede Venkat** ([626.808.8114](tel:626.808.8114)) or **Desiree Alvarado** (desiree@pasadenapromos.com) to apply or learn more.

Join us in empowering the next generation of leaders!

Rotary
District 5300

RYLA
Rotary Youth
Leadership Awards

Rotary YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) is an intensive, two-and-a-half-day leadership training program for high school Juniors in District 5300 chosen for their leadership potential. In addition to the development of leadership skills, RYLA is meant to develop understanding of Rotary among youth participants and reinforce and provide recognition for their efforts, accomplishments, skills and potential as leaders. Rotarians serve as facilitators to the students' learning and discovery, as well as role models of Rotary ideals of the Four Way Test and Service Above Self.

MARCH 21-23, 2025
CAMP CEDAR CREST
RUNNING SPRINGS, CA

APPLICATION DUE MARCH 1, 2025
MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW
EMAIL
RAGHADA@KHOURYENT.NET



The Scoot Zone

By Staff Reporter Dean Billman
Photographers: PP Ken Joe & Gui Bittencourt

Our guest speaker, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Abraham Meltzer, assured our club today that “Everyone is Innocent until proven guilty”, even though the new technology of Facial Recognition Technology is being deployed in criminal cases – and as he showed us today – can lead to wrongful arrests if used as a sole source of criminal identification.

President Stephen Smith rang the big brass Rotary Bell at 12:30 PM sharp and introduced **PP Mary Lou Byrne** as our song leader today, accompanied by The Four Way Test Singers (**Don Andruess, Marilyn Buchanan, Robert Lyons, Deborah Lewis, Phyllis Currie, David Moore, and Gary Kearney**) and since we were talking about Facial Recognition Technology (FRT) and the rise of artificial intelligence, she re-worked the lyrics of “Put on a Happy Face” (“spread sunshine all over the place, since computers know your face, put on a happy face!”) and we were all smiling as we sang the comical words.

Gary Kearney intoned our inspiration on The Rule of Law, reminding us that the basis of our American values and way of life, indeed our freedom itself, was all based on the respect of just and fair laws, and the equal adherence to the Rule of Law. He got a round of applause for his words.



Introduction of Guests:

- **PP Mary Lou** introduced the guest of our speaker, his sister, Eleanor Meltzer.
- **PP John Foulkes** was pleased to introduce his daughter, Debbie Foulkes.

Announcements and more announcements:

Bob Risley, offering a Polio Pig donation (when someone wants to announce a non-Rotarian event, they offer a donation to our Rotary International Polio Initiative to eradicate polio) as he quoted The Rule of Law towards holding our local utility accountable for the firestorm damages: “Inverse commendation, negligence, and damages, both real and emotional – all have been proved in a



“Inverse commendation, negligence, and damages, both real and emotional – all have been proved in a

court of law in similar cases” and he has offered to help victims to review their choices as an experienced attorney.

Russ Guiney proudly announced his and Pat’s first grandchild to his son in Oregon, and the focus of his new trips up North. Congratulations Russ and Pat!

President Stephen then pronounced that coming up is PP John Foulkes’s 96th Birthday – we broke out in singing Happy Birthday to John. Lots of smiles! (*Photo above*)

President Stephen took the podium to make several announcements of his own:

- Encouraged us to sign condolences cards to **PP Justene Adamec** and her daughter and Impact Club leader **Amanda Pumilia** on the passing of Justene’s father, and Amanda’s grandfather..

- Read Across America at Washington Elementary Stem Magnet School – details above.

- Trivia Night got waylaid by the firestorms, as co-hosts are overwhelmed with the recovery:

Deb Lewis lost her home to the fires, and **Lisa Cavalier** is fully engaged with her Boys and Girls Club duties. He seeks two new hosts and hopes the event can be re-scheduled to later in April or May – he will help with the trivia.

President Stephen then turned the microphone over to **Deb Raupp**, who had two special announcements:

- Next week is Speed Rotary Lunch, where everyone will sit in numbered tables and compete for prizes and attention. Deb asked for ten volunteer leaders, and the following brave souls raised their hands: PP Howard Raff, Fred Findley, George Falardeau, PE Hillary Schenk, Robert Lyons, Mike Bernard, PP Ken Joe, PP Ken Hill, David McAlexander and Patrick Dinan.

- Deb then turned serious: she is organizing the Altadena Fire Survivors: Back in Business volunteer group, where we Rotarians will make phone calls to impacted local businesses who both need help and can offer help. We would begin reaching out as a group around March 15th. Please join her: her email is draupp4444@gmail.com.

Desiree Alvarado again asked for adult volunteers to facilitate our RYLA youth on an eventful Youth Leadership Weekend in the mountains with high school juniors. She needs some adults who supervise, but mostly let the kids lead themselves, and it has been reported by past attendees **PP Mary Lou Byrne** and **David McAlexander** as a very worthwhile event. You must be registered by March 1st (to get screened and approved) for the event on March 21-23.

PP Mel Cohen again offered his Insurance Industry experience to anyone who wants a review of their policy – better now than later!

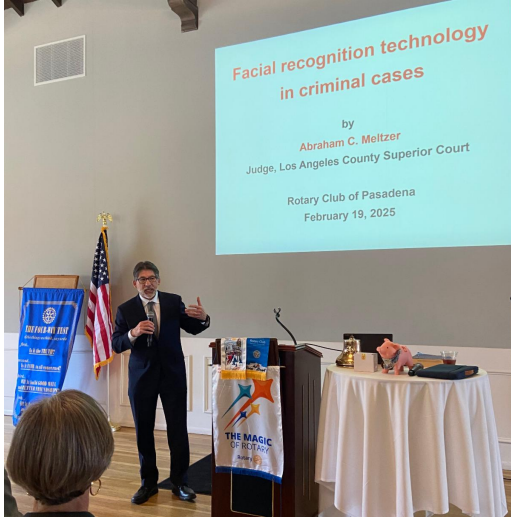
Introduction of our speaker was by **PP Mary Lou Byrne**, who remembered **Judge Abraham Meltzer** as a summer associate at the law firm she worked at 30 years ago, and even in those days he was noticed for his intellect and work ethic. She was not surprised by his steady rise within the legal and judicial ranks, to his current role as LA Superior Court Judge, currently serving in Pasadena.

His presentation on Facial Recognition Technology (FRT) and Artificial Intelligence and the role they play in the legal world was fascinating and easy to follow – it could have been a lot of statistics and bar charts – but instead he allowed us to grasp the simple way a computer “sees” a photograph, and how currently it often mis-interprets an image.



The computer sees the image as little pixels and tries to recognize patterns that fit into an image it has already seen – so it tries to match the photo with an image – and the results rarely are correct. For instance, a squirrel on a bucket over a water puddle was interpreted as a sea lion – not even close. A wolf and a husky may look similar, and confused for each other in the FRT system, but when viewed side-by-side, they are definitely different.

In law enforcement, and in many modern crime and spy movies, face recognition technology is accepted as flawless and perfect, but Judge Meltzer offered several examples of innocent people identified as criminals, based solely on the strength of FRT photo matching technology leading to the wrong person being arrested, based on the driver’s license photo. He even showed



how two different AI systems, using the same data base of millions of photos in a state driver's license photos, came up with ten likely suspects, but each had ten completely different people – how can anyone trust a system that almost randomly finds people in a vast photo database, and still gets it wrong?

Most importantly, police, judges, and juries do not know how these suspects are found and charged, and the huge margin for FRT error - and since this is such a new field of technology, how can anyone accept if you are guilty, based simply on photo match? The biggest realization by our club, many who are attorneys, was that defense attorneys are just now becoming aware of how flawed the FRT systems are, and the need to quickly get educated on them so they can adequately prepare to defend innocent clients.

Our club had questions: Are there standards in this science? Are judges issuing warrants based only on FRT? Does the FBI have anything better? (No, they have a huge database, but the FRT AI is the same). Do hats or masks work to hide your face? (Yes, especially covid masks); does the Airport face recognition system work better? (Yes. Because it is comparing our face to your Passport photo, One-on-One). **Alan Schier** wondered if eyewitness recognition is any better than FRT, and surprisingly, Judge Meltzer felt that they both are unreliable, as people forget a stranger's face – however, if you personally know the person, you are better to vouch for the recognition.



Robert Lyons closed the questions by asking if the jury pre-judges a suspect as guilty because the FRT computer chose to pick him – and Judge Meltzer pointed out that everyone is innocent until proven guilty, and that is the instruction the judge makes clear to the jury.

President Stephen gave Judge Meltzer his Magic Mug, which was gratefully accepted, and the meeting closed at 1:30 PM.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

John Foulkes	Feb. 24
Penn Patton	Feb. 24

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

March 5, 2025 - Denise Verret, Executive Director, Los Angeles Zoo
March 12, 2025 - Dan Stover Instrumental Music Competition
March 19, 2025 - To Be Determined

March 26, 2025 - Alex Santamaria, President/CEO, LAist - The Future of LAist

April 2, 2025 - Ed Shorer, Slot Car Racing - Back to Being a Kid: How Slot Car Racing Brings Happiness

April 9, 2025 - Robert Kleinhertz, Kleinhertz Economics - The Economy of the San Gabriel Valley, What to Expect

SPOKES is the weekly newsletter published by the Rotary Club of Pasadena

**Weekly Live Wednesday Meeting by RSVP
University Club Pasadena, 175 N. Oakland Ave.**

**Bureau Chief: Mary Lou Byrne
Spokes Chair/Publisher/Editor: Wendy Anderson**

Scout Zone Reporters: Mary Lou Byrne & Dean Billman

**Photographers: Hans Rosenberger, Hillary Schenk,
Tammy Silver, Ken Joe, Claudia Ponce de Leon, Mike
Bernard, Dede Venkat & Gui Bittencourt.**

Proofers: Kathy Meagher & Amanda Pumilia

**Making
Magic**

by doing Service

PROMOTING PEACE FIGHTING DISEASE

PROVIDING CLEAN WATER

SAVING MOTHERS AND CHILDREN

GROWING LOCAL ECONOMIES SUPPORTING EDUCATION

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT.



Pasadena Rotary Club
Stephen Smith, President 2024-25

**ROTARY CLUB OF PASADENA 2023-2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETS the 3rd Thursday of every month at 5pm - University Club of Pasadena**

PRESIDENT: Stephen Smith

PRESIDENT ELECT: Hillary Schenk

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Justene Adamec

SECRETARY: Wende Lee

TREASURER: Tony Phillips

**CLUB DIRECTORS: Don Andruess, George Falardeau, Frank Fish, Sandy Goodenough,
J.P. Harris, Debi Kroman, Robert Lyons, David McAlexander, Claudia Ponce de Leon, Nevino
Rocco, Tammy Silver, (President Elect Elect), Dede Venkat**

Non-Voting Member: Amanda Pumilia, Chair, The Impact Club

Rotary Club of Pasadena

**MAILING ADDRESS: 556 South Fair Oaks Ave., Suite 101, #379
Pasadena, CA 91105**

Wendy Anderson, Administrator - 626-683-8243 - office@pasadenarotary.com

Sandi Mejia-Ramirez, Accountant - 626-272-3424 - sandimejia@sbcglobal.net

www.pasadenarotary.com

Pasadena Rotary Club | 556 South Fair Oaks Ave. Suite 101, #379 | Pasadena, CA 91105 US

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