
Rotary

Club of Pasadena, CA



SPOKES NEWSLETTER

DISTRICT 5300 * Rotary Club 794 * February 7, 2025 * #01-0056

www.pasadenarotary.com

BRUCE BLAIR

"San Antonio Winery, an Immigrant Family's Enduring Impact"

Introducer: PP Ken Joe



Bruce Blair is the Hospitality & Training Manager for San Antonio Winery. Blair has over 35 years of management experience including as General Manager of Parkway Grill and Smitty's Grill in Pasadena. He has led hospitality operations at the Ritz-Carlton Huntington Hotel and Langham Huntington, the Beverly Hilton Hotel, and the Kimpton Hotel Group in San Francisco. Bruce is a Certified Wine Specialist and earned the certification of Certified Specialist of Wine (CSW) from the Society of Wine Educators.

For over eleven years, he and his wife have owned The Knitting Tree, L.A. a brick and mortar store 10 minutes from LAX. It was featured in KTLA Channel 5's nightly show: L.A. Unscripted on January 12, 2023. <http://ktla.com/video/olivia-in-la-the-knitting-tree/8303100>. The store was voted Best Yarn Store in L.A. for classes by Los Angeles Magazine.

Blair is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University. He has worked with the Riboli Family at San Antonio for over 7 years and has lived in Pasadena for 25 years.

WEDNESDAY – FEBRUARY 12, 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: Don Andruess

Inspiration: Desiree Alvarado

Scout Zone Reporter: Mary Lou Byrne

Photographer: Tammy Silver

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



The Eaton fire, which began on January 7th, 2025 has prompted a comprehensive response from various organizations to support affected residents. Below is a general overview of the assistance provided so far.

Financial Assistance

Change Reaction: This nonprofit has distributed cash payments of up to \$5,000 to 3,000 households impacted by the wildfires. Their Wildfire Direct Giving Fund, initially seeded with \$10 million, aims to address immediate needs and prevent debt accumulation.

Pasadena Community Foundation: PCF has established the Eaton Fire Relief & Recovery Fund to support recovery efforts. They are working with local leaders and nonprofits to deploy resources effectively.

Government Assistance

FEMA: FEMA has granted a Fire Management Assistance Grant to support firefighting efforts. Additionally, individuals affected by the fire are encouraged to apply for disaster assistance through FEMA's programs.

California State Government: Governor Newsom signed a \$2.5 billion relief package to expedite debris removal, inspection of permits, and reconstruction of homes and schools in the affected area.

Community Support:

Local Organizations: Various community groups have mobilized to provide immediate relief, including shelter, food, and clothing.

What is Pasadena Rotary doing?

1) Our Club's Board of Directors will meet later in February (I was unable to make the January Board meeting) and determine how to reallocate \$63,000 that was initially going to Community Grants.

2) Our club has been selected by the Rotary Club of Altadena to assist them in their "Day of Service", which will be Saturday (February 8th) from 10:00AM to 2:00PM (set-up does begin at 7:00). We had many sign-ups at our lunch on Wednesday and hope to get more from those that read Spokes.

- 3) We are again assisting our Altadena Rotary club in supporting their community. Alexander's Steakhouse is pleased to host "Helping Hands Raising Up Altadena." The proceeds will help provide much needed relief and recovery efforts for those affected by the fire. It is Thursday, February 20th from 7:00-10:30. The cost is \$150 per ticket (plus a 20% service charge).
- 4) We are attempting to get a Grant application to District 5300 to receive \$2,500 to address the needs of first responders and those impacted by the 2025 Southern California Wildfires.
- 5) Gary Kearney and I visited the "Disaster Recovery Center" recently on Woodbury Road in Altadena. I was able to gather information from a plethora of City, County, State, and Federal agencies. Our remarkable Paul Martin is putting this information in a QR (Quick Response) code, which should be available in the near future. This should facilitate getting a lot of important information in one location.
- 6) I am still working with my counterpart in South Pasadena, David Morales, to get this Herb Alpert Documentary, which has morphed into a Fundraiser for the Eaton Canyon fire, to the finish line. All I can say is the wheels move slowly when dealing with different entities.

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



Alan Schier and Mike Bernard checking in Paul Roach and his guest Sudof Vakill

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



PCC out in force: Alex Boekelheide, Tammy Silver, Frank Cardenas, Nancy Davis, Mel Cohen, Jose Gomez, Amy Carnes, Sandy Mejia, Norman Gensemer, and Julie Gutierrez.

ROTARY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS

DAY OF SERVICE

Mark Mariscal, Rotary Club of Altadena invites you to join their **Day of Service this coming Saturday (February 8th)** from 10am-2pm. Set up starts as early as 7 am and the whole thing wraps up by 3 pm.
Location: **Grocery outlet parking lot, 2270 No. Lake Avenue**

They will give away food, new clothing, gift cards, information, household items, etc. to more than 400 families. This event will need at least 75 volunteers.

DIAD Chair David McAlexander: david_mcalexander@onebox.com

Impact Club Chair Amanda Pumilia: apumilia@yahoo.com

Helping Hands Raising Up Altadena!
Thursday – 2/20/25 7-10:30 pm - \$150 ticket

Alexander's Steakhouse is pleased to host "**Helping Hands Raising Up Altadena**" a special event dedicated to supporting our community in the wake of the devastating Eaton Fire. Enjoy a delicious three-course dinner while being entertained by live performances from local artists and a silent auction.

The proceeds benefit the Rotary Club of Altadena's EATON Fire Recovery Fund, helping to provide much-needed relief and recovery efforts for those affected by the fire. For details or to purchase a ticket click on the link.

[**https://www.exploretock.com/alexanderssteakhousepasadena/event/529854**](https://www.exploretock.com/alexanderssteakhousepasadena/event/529854)

Rotary



Districts 5280 & 5300

PART II: UNDERSTANDING AND LIVING WITH COLLECTIVE TRAUMA

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16 | 10:00AM-11:30AM VIA ZOOM

Please join us for a conversation about understanding and living with collective trauma. All are welcome, including those directly and indirectly affected by the wildfire disaster. This is a complimentary event.

Meeting ID: 889 3002 2869

Pre-registration is encouraged:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/wLuLYYtcTXGyIN2wRwRUZg#/registration>

PRESENTERS:



DR. VICKI RADEL, PH.D

UCLA Philosophy of
Psychology
Private Practice, Palos Verdes
PDG D5280



RUDY HAYEK, MA

Licensed Marriage & Family
Therapist
President, Rotary Club of
Glendora
D5300 Mental Health
Committee Co-chair



ALLISON SUTHERLAND

Grief Specialist
RAGFP Past Chair &
Cadre Office
PDG, D1150, Wales



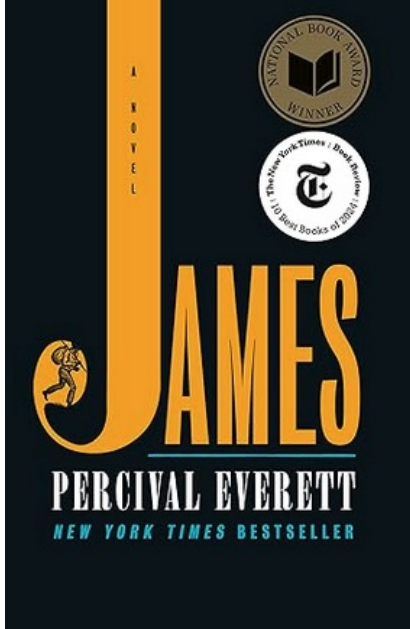
SHEILA GUTIERREZ, MS

Licensed Marriage & Family
Therapist
Critical Incident Debriefer
Private Practice in Glendora
D5300 Mental Health
Committee Co-chair

ROTARY READERS

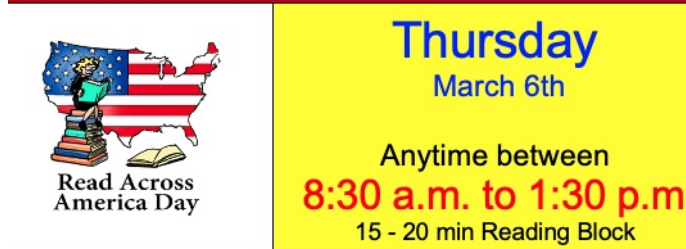
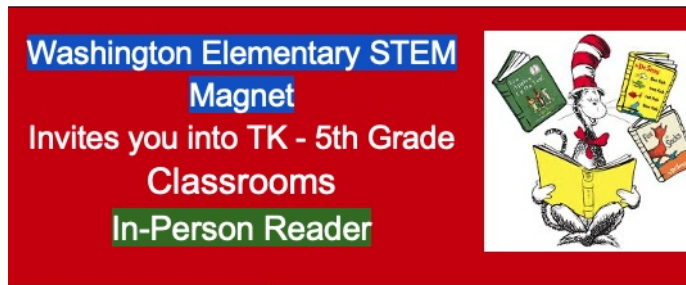
Rotary Readers will meet via **Zoom** on
March 3rd at 6 pm

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 Diana Peterson-More at dpmoe@gmail.com.





Volunteers 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: Tammy Silver & Gui Bittencourt

The Tongva Tribe's Altadena property survived the Eaton Fire, and firefighters surmise that it might have been the ancient oak trees lining the property that saved the building. **Dr. Gomez**, President of Pasadena City College noted that the oak trees were older than PCC, and even if oak trees burn to the ground, the roots in the soil actually may regenerate the tree – and that Altadena and PCC are resilient like the tough oaks, and every student graduate at PCC is like a seed planted in the community, ready to grow back stronger. “We’ve built before, and we can do it again.”

President Stephen Smith rang the big brass Rotary Bell, calling the meeting to order at 12:30pm and gave the mic to song leader **Eric Olson** who noted “bad things happen in our lives, and its good for people who help lead to the other side” and to give us strength, we sang God Bless America accompanied by Ann Louise.

Sandi Mejia-Ramirez, our hard-working accountant and member, inspired by our speaker from PCC, noted the transformative power of knowledge – breaking down barriers, a desire to make a difference, and like Rotarians, embrace common goals and change lives for generations to come.



PP Mary Lou Byrne presented our newest member, **Ms. Peggy Kelley**, into the Impact Club (our Satellite club for busy professionals, affiliated with our main club). Mary Lou noted that Peggy knows just about everyone in the Pasadena area, that she organized her and Gary's wedding eight years ago and has been involved with many Pasadena organizations. Peggy introduced herself, saying, “Hello Rotary, we've been 'dating' for many years, and it's all about community – it's who we are, everyone matters, and in all my years at Pasadena Media, Pasadena Symphony, and The Pasadena Showcase House, etc. I know most everybody in this room, and Rotary is all about service, so I finally said, I do!” Mary Lou presented Peggy with a brand new blue Rotary t-



shirt, courtesy of Impact Chair **Amanda Pumilia**.

Guests (and we had quite a few):

- **David Moore** introduced his co-worker Norman Gensemer
- **Paul Roach** of HMRI introduced Ms. Sudof Vakill, of the HMRI Foundation
- **PP Ken Hill**, relishing the power of having a microphone in his hands (Past Presidents have been known to not give the microphone back once they get it, re-living their “good old days” of being President), introduced the CEO of the Pasadena Symphony and Pops, Andy Brown
- **PP Howard Raff** welcomed Ms. Christen Gair, who works in finance and is interested in joining our club.
- **Mike Bernard** introduced Wayne Heron, Director of Advancement at Maranatha High School
- **Sandi Mejia** welcomed Ms. Nancy Davis, President of Chelsea Philanthropy, and former Rotarian Ms. Julie Gutierrez, former Pasadena Assistant City Manager, manager of the Pasadena Playhouse and now of the PCC Foundation Board
- **Hans Rosenberger** welcomed Glendale Rotarian Lou Mirada
- PCC Foundation Board President **Frank Cardenas** introduced Dr. Amy Carnes, PCC Foundation Development Director

Announcements (please see breakouts for more information):

- **Venice Dunn**, of Union Station Homeless Services, explained that she had missed all the January meetings as they were helping hundreds of people displaced by the wildfires, and made the plea for volunteers on Wednesdays to help with their Pasadena aid distribution center at 4121 S. Raymond Avenue (11 am to 7 pm).
- **Desiree Alvarado** with co-chair **Dede Venkat** are organizing the Pasadena Rotary Youth Leadership Academy (RYLA) event taking place March 21-23, and they need facilitators and help reaching out to 11th grade candidates. They recalled their experience last year, and how gratifying it was to watch youth leaders grow into future Rotarians. See above details.
- **President Stephen** had a list of announcements:
 - o **Robert Earnest** recently lost his father, and **Allison Burgos** set out condolence cards for us all to sign
 - o **Sean Cain**, Pasadena Foundation Treasurer, will give a brief report at next week’s lunch meeting (hint: we are in good shape)
 - o See details above for Day of Service; Alexander’s Steakhouse fundraiser for Altadena Rotary Foundation; and Read Across America.
 - o Our highly anticipated Rotary Trivia Night fundraiser is being postponed until end of April, or May, due to the disaster relief.

David Moore, a PCC Graduate, who went on to graduate from USC and then came back to Pasadena to serve in his current business helping others, introduced out guest speaker today, **Dr. Jose Gomez**, who called David, “an awesome alum, back in our community.” He noted all the PCC guests and Rotarians in the audience, including President Elect-Elect **Tammy Silver**, who sits as a PCC Trustee, exclaimed, “We are all PCC!”

Dr. Gomez didn’t let a technological glitch of a PCC video slow him down (Click on link for PCC’s Centennial Video -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_FvLrGealFE)— he showed his resilience by forging on with his presentation in three parts: how Pasadena and PCC were woven into each other from the City’s early days; how it had been nearly destroyed by the Earthquake of 1933, and it’s subsequent rebuild; and how the pace and velocity of change is remaking the school for the new demands of Pasadena and the world.



In the last 100 years, PCC had many famous graduates, and he noted how they all broke barriers and made the world a better place, like Jackie Robinson, Octavia Butler, and many JPL scientists. But what Dr. Gomez was most proud of was the way the school grew from the disastrous earthquake of 1933. He showed us pictures of the first grand columned buildings with the first class of college students in 1922, answering the need



of common education for the families moving to Pasadena after World War I. Interestingly, the schools were organized in a new way: Grades One through Six were elementary, Grades Seven through Ten were high school, and Grades Eleven through Fourteen were college – it didn't prove lasting, and the later years it went to the traditional elementary, middle and high school classes, but now some are seeing the wisdom of enrolling high school students in dual-age college classes.

The next topics were very interesting, especially right now with the destruction and rebuilding of Altadena, as we saw the total destruction of the PCC campus by the earthquake of 1933 – whole buildings were piles of rubble, and the classes took place in a field of tents. There was a realization that we needed craft workers to build with modern materials and methods, and Dr. Gomez showed us the concept of Civic Construction – students designing modern affordable homes and then building spec

versions to be purchased and delivered – some in Altadena itself (and many burned down in the fires last month). However, we saw that for years, PCC led the way training tradespeople who made a difference – all from the terrible experience of 1933. Dr. Gomez described “Civic Construction comes after destruction, and a builder is needed at any given moment of history.”

PCC builds practical programs to meet the current needs of the local community. When nurses were needed in the 1930's, PCC built a program to educate nurses in conjunction with the (now) Huntington Hospital; returning veterans from recent wars got management training to re-enter the modern workforce; the goal of teaching young people craft trades changed in the 1990's when the goal was to have all students graduate with a four-year college degree, so all PCC classes became transferable to local UC's and Cal colleges (dropping the vocational classes).

And now, with the wildfires and thousands of homes to be rebuilt – as quick as possible, but with new codes, standards and materials – PCC is ramping up its curriculum to serve the new needs, drawing on the experience of the 1933 earthquake rebuilding. Member **Robert Lyons**, a professional building contractor, asked if PCC was going to drop its opera classes for more vocational classes to prepare for the surge in building, and Dr. Gomez said, “I want to offer opera and plumbing classes – to everyone!” Unlike elite colleges and universities, “PCC has a 100% acceptance rate for students. We accept everyone who wants to learn.” We responded with applause.

He ended by announcing Rotarian **Dr. Elizabeth Blanco** (Photo right with Dr. Gomez), PUSD Superintendent, was leading the effort at the College for Technical Education (CTE) with the building trades, and that he and PCC Trustee **Tammy Silver** had just returned from Sacramento looking at funding for a building trades construction program. As an invitation, because we were fascinated with the 1930's home building project, Dr. Gomez invited us to drive down Bonnie Street that runs on the East side of campus, which has 13 houses, and 75% of them are these PCC homes.

President Stephen handed Dr. Gomez his famous Magic Mug memento and called the meeting at 1:30pm.





L2R: Frank Cardenas, Amy Carnes, Norman Gensemer, David Moore, Jose Gomez, Elizabeth Blanco, Nancy Davis, Tammy Silver

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

Jan Adams	Feb. 8
Omar Facory	Feb. 8
Cory Brendel	Feb. 9
Cathy Simms	Feb. 9
Phyllis Mueller	Feb. 9
Helen Baatz	Feb. 10
Jan Copley	Feb. 12
Alan Schier	Feb. 13

HAPPY ROTAVERSARY!!!

Ariel Drachenberg	2/10/10	15 Years
Phyllis Mueller	2/10/16	9 Years

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Feb. 19, 2025 - Judge Abraham Metzger, Los Angeles Superior Court - Facial Recognition Technology in Criminal Cases

Feb. 26, 2025 - Michael Lamb, Cal Tech Professor of Geology - The Science of Post-Wildfires Debris Flows

March 5, 2025 - Denise Verret, Executive Director, Los Angeles Zoo

March 12, 2025 - Dan Stover Instrumental Music Competition

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.

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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: Fred Soldwedel

TREASURER: Tony Phillips

**CLUB DIRECTORS: Don Andrues, 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

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