
Rotary

Club of Pasadena, CA

SPOKES NEWSLETTER

DISTRICT 5300 * Rotary Club 794 * September 27, 2024 * #01-0039

www.pasadenarotary.com

DR. LAWTON GRAY

"Welcome to John Muir High School College Magnet"

Introducer: JIM OSTERLING



Dr. Lawton Gray III is the principal of John Muir High School. Dr. Gray began his educational career 28 years ago teaching mathematics at Pasadena High School. After teaching, Dr. Gray was the Dean of Students and Assistant Principal at Temple City High School. The next step in his career was as Principal of Oak Avenue Intermediate School. Dr. Gray led the school to receiving the 2017 California Gold Ribbon School Award and in that same year, the school received the Title I Academic Achievement Award by the California Department of Education.

In May of 2017, Dr. Gray was selected to lead his alma mater, John Muir High School. At John Muir, Dr. Gray has helped to usher in the Early College Magnet program, which gives students the opportunity to earn college credit while enrolled in high school. Through Dr. Gray's leadership the school's enrollment has grown from 730 students to over 1,200.

Dr. Gray earned his Doctorate from the University of Southern California, a Master's degree from Point Loma Nazarene University, and a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics from Morehouse College. One of Dr. Gray's proudest accolades was being selected as the Pasadena Unified School District's Principal of the year in 2021, because of his service to students and families during the Pandemic. Dr. Gray is Married to Melanie Gray and has two children. Lauren who is a John Muir graduate and freshman at UCLA and Lawton IV who is a sophomore at John Muir High School.

WEDNESDAY – OCTOBER 2, 2024

UNIVERSITY CLUB OF PASADENA - 12:00 pm

175 N. Oakland Ave, Pasadena 91101

RSVP Deadline: 4:00 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 Pianist: Ann Louise Christensen

Song Leader: Don Andrues - Accompanied by Ann Louise

Inspiration: Royce Gilder

Scout Zone Reporter: PE-E Hillary Schenk

Photographer: 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



An article in the October Rotary Magazine caught my eye the other day. Between 2000 and 2018, there were nearly 300,000 minors that were married in the United States. Up until 2018, child marriage remained legal in every state. While some states have a minimum age requirement of 18, most allow for minors to marry with parental or judicial consent. Because marriage is regulated by the states, there is no federal law that bans child marriage. That means in most states across the country, minors can be forced into marriage without the ability to exit one.

Fraidy Reiss, an Orthodox Jewish lady, was married when she was young. (Under Orthodox Jewish law, only the husband has the power to divorce his wife). She ultimately divorced after having two children and worked her way through college. In 2011, she founded "Unchained at Last" and has grown her organization to eight employees with more than \$2 million in total assets. She has

helped out nearly 1,000 to date.

She now stands as among the country's most vocal activists speaking out against child and forced marriage. She publishes op-eds in outlets around the country and works directly with legislatures to craft bills that push to support domestic survivors and end the practice of child and forced marriage. Fraidy travels all over the country promoting Unchained's mission to hundreds of policymakers, advocates and survivors.

When RI was looking for someone to speak about ending child marriage at a Rotary Day with

UNICEF in 2022 devoted to empowering girls, it turned to her. The obvious answer is that we need to change the laws in the United States and hopefully, that will happen sooner than later. There is a webinar which introduced six People of Action: Champions of Girls Empowerment and is available at on.rotary.org/UNICEF-day.

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

**MEALS & SEATING ARE PROVIDED
BASED ON RSVP'S WE RECEIVE**

BUFFET MEAL
Chef Tony, The University Club

**PLEASE RSVP
IF YOU ARE ATTENDING!**
office@pasadenarotary.com

**CLICK HERE TO
RSVP TODAY**



**ROTARY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
& EVENTS**

IMPACT CLUB EVENTS

TOMORROW!!!

SATURDAY

9/28

EATON CANYON TRAIL CLEAN-UP

8 AM - Meet at the Mt Wilson/Pinecrest Gate, Mt Wilson Toll Rd, Altadena, CA (by the bridge to the Falls). Street Parking can be limited, so watch no parking signs and arrive early! Wear shoes you don't mind getting wet.

COLLECTION
DRIVE

NOW UNTIL
OCTOBER
17TH

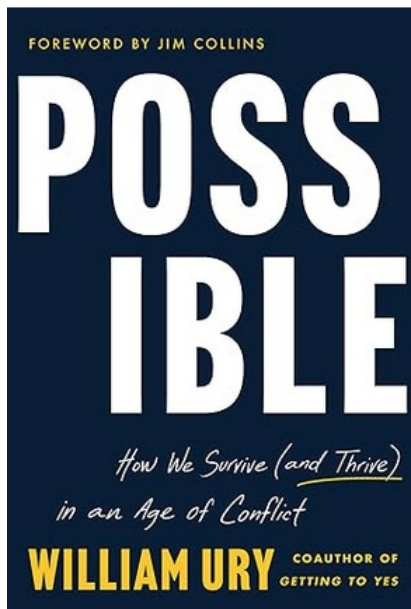
RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE

HALLOWEEN COLLECTION DRIVE

Collecting Halloween candy, new costumes for families, Halloween-inspired hats, headbands, and size inclusive costumes for their Trunk or Treat. Bring to the bin at Rotary meetings or email Amanda to arrange drop-off.

Contact Impact Club Chair Amanda Pumilia with any questions at
apumilia@yahoo.com

Want to be notified about upcoming service and social events?
Join <https://www.meetup.com/pasadena-rotary-impact-club/>



ROTARY READERS

Rotary Readers will meet October 7th at 6 pm.

Bob Risley will review
Possible How We Survive (and Thrive) in an Age of
Conflict by William Ury.

Bring something to share for dinner.
You do not have to have read the book.

Please contact Jan Sanders
janinpasadena@gmail.com for location and
more information.
Please RSVP.



MT. WILSON OBSERVATORY EXCURSION

Friday, October 18th

\$80 for tour + box dinner/drinks or \$50 for tour only

Pasadena Rotary will be going up Mt. Wilson on Friday, October 18th to experience stars, planets and the cosmos via the 60" telescope. Through the Mount Wilson Institute guides, each attendee will look several times through the eyepiece on the telescope at chosen celestial targets that will include the planet Saturn!

But capacity of the tour is limited to 25 people so this is a "First RSVP-First Twenty-Five" Rotarians and guests are in!

There are two sign-up options—one is the tour plus a box dinner and drinks at a park just outside of the observatory grounds. Because we need to enter the observatory grounds at 6:30 PM, there is a second option for those who can get there by that time but not in time for dinner. More details will follow regarding the timing of the dinner picnic and possible ride sharing. The evening should go to around 9:00 PM although you can leave early if needed.

RSVP to Rob Fisher at rob@fbrg.agency to see the stars!

**WORLD
POLIO DAY**
24 OCTOBER



Third Annual Pasadena Rotary World Polio Day Run/Walk/Ride Around the Rose Bowl

Thursday, October 24, 2024

Meet at Brookside Clubhouse 7:00 a.m.

We're doing 3 miles/5K to raise money for polio eradication. Walk, run, ride your bike, skateboard, or scooter! Pledge per mile, per step, per minute — it's up to you! Ask your friends to participate or pledge, too! BIG FUN !!



Contact Dean Billman (dabillman@icloud.com) or Morgan Nadeau (beck1enadeau@yahoo.com) to sign up or for more information

Order Your End Polio Now tee on or before October 4 — email justene@gmail.com to order and for size info. \$22 (or so) charged to your Rotary account. Unisex sizes S-4XL.



The Scoot Zone

By Staff Reporter Dean Billman
Photographer: Gui Bittencourt

Our speaker today, former LA Times columnist Chris Erskine, recounted how he got profanely dressed down by Dodgers Head Coach Tommy Lasorda, and profiled a “bear whisperer” who became world famous due to his stories (who knew that in the world of bears, “a fat bear is as sexy as Brad Pitt in his underwear”?). Chris is the author of two well-received books, and he entertained with great stories of his acquaintance with famous people who let him into their lives, like Dodgers announcers Vin Scully and Monday Night football’s Howard Cosell.

President Stephen Smith rang the loud brass Rotary bell at 12:30pm and brought the club to its feet, as we all sang “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” by Jack Norworth and Albert Von Tilzer, led by the **Eric Olson** and his Rotary Four Way Test Choir (**Don Andruess, Marilyn Buchanan, PP Diana Peterson-More, and PP Cory Brendel**), inspired by our speakers’ fondness for all things Dodger baseball and the Dodgers’ Shohei Ohtani’s tremendous feat of the 50/50 club. Our formal inspiration was by Tyros member **Parker Hayward**, quoting great writers George Benard Shaw (“Imagination is the beginning of Creation”) and Maya Angelou (“You can’t use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have”).



Guests: Tyros member **Antonia Rezik** announced his guest, Leilani Nickel, has applied for membership to our club; **PP Howard Raff** announced his guest, Ben Selick of Monrovia Travel, applied for membership – we look forward to their fellowship and service!

PP Cory Brendel was proud to announce his guest, his wonderful wife Liza Billington, who is recovering from a broken wrist and feeling much better.

Announcements (see individual snapshots in Spokes):

- **PP Justene Adamec** announced the Impact Club happy hour at Lucky Baldwin's this evening – we are sure it was a great time to mingle.
 - o Service Project #1 – This Saturday at 8am, Eaton Canyon trail clean-up. Meet at Mt. Wilson/Pinecrest drive gate in Altadena. **President Stephen** has promised coffee and bagels at his house afterward. Wear waterproof shoes.
 - o Service Project #2 – Supporting Ronald McDonald House's "Trunk or Treat" – bring Halloween donations to the collection bin by the check-in desk (until October 16th).
- Polio Pig announcement: **David Moore** and **George Ricciadella** of Impact House Recovery Center announced a "Save the Date" for a Dash Thru the 80's event at Hahamongna Park next January 26th, 2025 – they are looking for sponsors and volunteers. Flyers were on the tables. **George Falardeau** (of Pasadena Media) urged us to support this event.
- **George Falardeau**, with **David McAlexander**, also urged us to not just write charity checks, but to volunteer with our time to support Rotary Service projects – and for our club to volunteer for the annual Thanksgiving dinner service project for Union Station at Central Park in Pasadena, we have to first raise \$1,000 of food donations, namely turkeys and Velveeta cheese blocks, and he was starting off with his own Rotary donation of \$100.
- **Dean Billman** (your scribe) joined with **David McAlexander**, gave us bad news and then actionable news:
 - o Polio virus cases are rising alarmingly worldwide, with now three times as many this year than last (36 cases this year so far and climbing). He praised our Rotary International work raising funds in the past, but we need to keep working.
 - o **David McAlexander**, raising a bicycle wheel, challenged us to also create a Pasadena Polio Peloton, joining our walk around the Rose Bowl on World Polio Day (October 24th) with bike riders, to create awareness of the eradication efforts and raise funds.
- **PP Cathy Simms** announced that to come to Rotary Readers, reading the book is not mandatory, and all are welcome to learn about the plot. It will be on October 7th at 6pm. See above for more details.
- **PP Rob Fisher** went on Google to research previous visitors' comments upon visiting the Mt. Wilson telescope, and

he is trying to fill the last seven slots in the chair to have dinner and gaze at the heavens at one of America's greatest treasures, open only by invitation – this is your limited chance to see a crown jewel of Pasadena.

· **Dr. Jose Gomez**, Superintendent – President of Pasadena City College, mentioned Octavia E. Butler, a great science fiction writer, actors William Holden, Nick Nolte, and singers Kenny Loggins, and Van Halen all attended PCC, and he invites us to celebrate PCC's 100th Birthday Celebration on Saturday, September 28th from 11am to 3pm. Rock on!



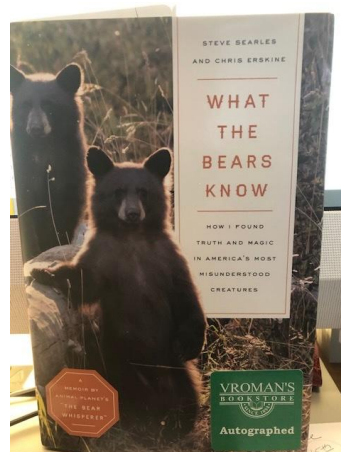
PP Justene Adamec introduced our speaker, Author, and columnist Chris Erskine, whose kids attended grade school together and Justene noted that her daughter was often mentioned as “the little red-haired girl” in many of his humorous stories of raising his family through the years. Chris mentioned his 30 years at the LA Times, and now publishes through the local Outlook newspaper, as well as publishing several popular books. He also was alarmed how journalism today is so underfunded and that newspapers are a greater risk than ever – how the LA Times used to be so flush with cash and profits, but today has to be subsidized by the millionaire owner each year – and he hopes something can turn that around.

He thought it was amusing that while the rest of the newspaper covered world-shaking events and local crises and calamities, he alone covered life in the suburbs with stories of human trials and canny observations, all from his life in LA. From Boy Scouts, Rotary and AYSO, to the new rules of high school dances (kids don't go on Homecoming Dates anymore, they

attend dances in packs, like wolves. He balanced life as a journalist with life as a dad of coaching kids' soccer and little league baseball, recording the highs and funny lows – and teaching little 5-year-olds the life-changing skills of “shaking hands and looking the other person in the eye.”

His long history of covering sports, which was his first career in journalism, gave him real insight into the world of celebrity. He was struck how people deal with the pressures of celebrity, and the need to use the power of ego to protect themselves and achieve the goals they set out to do – Coach Tommy Lasorda ranked as number 5 in his rank of “The Ten Biggest Egos in LA” which earned a profane-filled angry outburst from Tommy when he met Chris in the golf course, to which Chris replied that “you did make the list, you should be glad.” But he reserves his

fondest memories for Dodgers announcer Vin Scully, who had a “melodic voice” - Chris did some background work and discovered musical theater was Vin’s first talent in college, and he went from barbershop quartet to play-by-play announcer for the Brooklyn Dodgers to the World Series winning LA Dodgers for 67 years. Chris’s latest book is titled “Perfect Eloquence: An Appreciation of Vin Scully.”



Hearing about a “Bear Whisperer” up in Mammoth Lakes led Chris to travel there to get a local-interest story, and that relationship with Steve Searles led to a book chronicling a former bear trapper who turned into a bear conservationist, teaching the locals how to live (and repel) bears from the neighborhood. Altadena and Sierra Madre residents have asked for help from Steve, and their book is soon to come out in paperback. One amusing story was when a national network news desk in New York City heard about the book, they sent a NY team to “go meet Steve and get a picture of a bear.” Being all proper East Coast Urbanites, they assumed Steve was a local rube, and so when they joined him on a bear-picture expedition at 5 am, all climbing into his large truck with cameras and staff, they expected a real backwoods adventure, complete with hillbilly escapes. Instead, Steve revved up his truck with everyone in it, and roared straight ahead into a dumpster on the other side of the parking lot – a huge

black bear jumped up and out, right onto the hood of the truck and bounded over the top of the truck and into the woods! The startled crew was terrified, and elated, but no cameras were running. They asked if he could do that again, and he said, “No. The point was that most bears don’t live beyond 2 years old since they usually get run over by trucks on the roads, and he is trying to teach the bears to run when they hear a revving truck.” The news crew realized Steve wasn’t a simpleton, but a savvy animal conservationist. They had a story to tell, and they also learned a lot about bears.

Reporter's p.s. – We attended a book signing at Vroman’s to see and hear Chris Ersine and Steve Searles talk about their adventures – they are such an adventurous Odd Couple – Chris being smooth and Steve being a rough bear of a man – that it was just as entertaining. We could invite Steve to speak to our club, but he would have to step out every ten minutes to smoke, and he would fill a “curse jar” with his language.



L2R: PP Diana Peterson-More, Robert Earnest, PP Justene Adamec, President, Stephen, Chris Erskine, Jonathan Edwards, Rob Fisher, PP Ken Joe, Mark Waterson

POLIO PIG & COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS AT WEDNESDAY MEETING

ALL ANNOUNCEMENTS MUST BE PRE-APPROVED!

Wish to "Show & Tell" us what you are up to or make an announcement (30 seconds) about your family, business or a favorite nonprofit or a Committee announcement? Email Wendy at office@pasadenarotary.com by Tues at noon. Minimum donation for Polio Pig Announcement: \$20 or for \$30+ which is billed to your account. Additional \$20 If you wish to leave flyers (Committees: in a stack on the table not individual) or a hand-out at end of meeting. Non-Rotarian: Leave at Reception Desk for pick up.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

Eszylfie Taylor	September 27th
Harrison Gulla	September 28th
Angie Pizano	September 29th
Alex Oscco	October 3rd

HAPPY ROTAVERSARY!

Charles Kiu	9/27/06	18 Years
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Josh McCurry	9/27/23	1 Year
Lily Goldfarb	9/27/23	1 Year
Lisa Wilson	9/27/23	1 Year
Debi Kroman	9/30/09	15 Years

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Oct. 9 - Michael Driebe, District 5300 Governor
Oct. 16 - Susie Kasielke, LA Zoo Curator of Birds, Retired - The California Condor: A Long Road to Recovery
Oct. 23 - TBA
Oct. 30 - Marsha Rood - The Rebirth of Old Pasadena: The Untold Story
Nov. 5 - Brian Wong, CEO SGV Habitat for Humanity - Building Low Cost Housing in Pasadena

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

Proofers: Mary Wilson & Kathy Meagher

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

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IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Justene Adamec

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J.P. Harris, Debi Kroman, Robert Lyons, David McAlexander, Claudia Ponce de Leon,
Nevino Rocco, Tammy Silver, Dede Venkat

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

Rotary Club of Pasadena

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