



**'SPARKS' OFF THE ROTARY WHEEL**

*An Award-Winning Newsletter*

Edited by Sarah O'Brien

**The Rotary Club of Altadena meets Thursdays at noon  
at the Altadena Town and Country Club**

**Rotary Club of Altadena - #772**

Chartered: February 14, 1949, P.O. Box 414, Altadena, CA 91003

RI Pres: Stephanie Urchick, Dist. 5300 Gov: Michael Driebe



**MARCH 20, 2025**

**March is: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene month**

**THIS WEEK: KENI ARTS**

**Westminster Presbyterian Church 12.00 - 1:30 pm**

**1757 N Lake Ave, Pasadena, CA 91104**

Speaker Chair: Ashley Watts



Keni Arts has painted 'en plein air' (outdoors) all across America. He has also pitched his easel in Africa, Brazil, England, Germany and Mexico. Plus, he's painted the backlots of all the major movie studios in Hollywood. But the 'Denas' (Altadena and Pasadena) are where his paint kits feel most at home; as it has been since 1977.

"Our small cities are rich in architectural styles and diverse in culture," says Keni.

On January 7, 2025, Altadena changed when it was ravaged by the Eaton Fire. However, Keni's art remains the same. That is, he continues to capture beautiful Altadena with his paintbrushes.

He sees beauty coming from destruction, and thus began his new series of watercolors, 'Beauty From Ashes'. He will remain and paint on the streets until the 'new' (and hopefully in many ways the 'same') Altadena rises from the ashes.

**[www.keniarts.com](http://www.keniarts.com)**

**Officers**

President: Maricela Viramontes  
Vice President: Dawn Digrius Smith  
President Elect: Brad Roeber

Treasurer: Mike Noll  
Bus: 626-657-2287  
Secretary: James Gorton  
Bus: 626-793-6215

**Directors**

Craig Cox  
Maria Perez-Arton  
Mark Mariscal  
Sarah O'Brien  
Lisa Rickard  
Doug Colliflower  
Brad Roeber

**Chairs**

Executive Club Secretary: Mark Mariscal  
Membership: Maria Perez-Arton & Brad Roeber  
Foundation: Steve Kerekes  
Service Projects: Mike Zoeller

**Subcommittees**

Community Service: Craig Cox  
Vocational Service: Steve Kerekes  
Youth Contests, Scholarships, Awards: Mike Zoeller  
Youth Activities: Tony Hill  
International Service: Sarah O'Brien

# LAST WEEK: JEFF PRANG LA COUNTY ASSESSOR

Review by Doug Colliflower



This past week, our Rotary Club had the privilege of hosting Jeff Prang, the Los Angeles County Assessor, as our guest speaker. With a distinguished career in public service and a decade of membership in the Beverly Hills Rotary Club, Jeff provided us with an insightful look into the operations of the Assessor's Office, its critical role in the county's economic landscape, and the measures being taken to assist those affected by the recent Eaton Fire.

## The Role of the Assessor's Office

The Los Angeles County Assessor's Office is responsible for identifying, listing, and valuing all taxable property in the county. This is no small task, as Los Angeles County is home to approximately 2.5 million real property parcels. These include residential homes, commercial buildings, industrial facilities, and even unique assets such as aircraft and racehorses. The assessments provided by the Assessor's Office form the basis for property taxes, which fund vital public services, including schools, law enforcement, fire departments, and infrastructure improvements.

In 2024, the assessment tax roll for Los Angeles County reached an astonishing \$2 trillion. This figure reflects the cumulative value of all taxable properties in the county, demonstrating the immense economic weight that property taxation carries in supporting government functions.

## The Impact of Wildfires and Property Tax Loss

Unfortunately, natural disasters such as wildfires significantly impact property values and, consequently, tax revenues. Jeff Prang projected that due to the recent wildfires, including the devastating Eaton Fire, Los Angeles County could see a tax revenue loss ranging from \$200 to \$300 million. This loss results from property devaluations, reassessments, and delays in rebuilding efforts.



## CLUB MEMBERS WHO LOST THEIR HOMES TO THE EATON FIRE:

**Maricela**

**Lisa**

**Dawn**

**Mark**

**Rene**

**Sue**

**Carol**

*(Sue's sister and friend of Rotary)*

**Linda C.**

**Wendy**

**Lauren**

**Frank**

**Tony**

**Sarah**

**Roger Fennell**

**Dennis McGinley**

Former member

**David Smith** lost his place of  
business (carpenter shop)

## Fire Relief Resources:

<https://www.altadenalibrary.org/news/emergency-resources>

<https://sd25.senate.ca.gov/eaton-wildfire-resources>

<https://altadenatowncouncil.org/2025/01/information-resources-eaton-fire/>

## Assistance for Eaton Fire Victims

Recognizing the struggles faced by those affected by wildfires, the Assessor's Office has taken proactive steps to provide relief. Property owners who have suffered significant damage or total loss due to the fire are eligible for reassessment, which can substantially lower their property tax burden while they rebuild. The office is expediting claims for affected homeowners and businesses, ensuring that those impacted receive necessary tax relief as quickly as possible.

Additionally, Jeff Prang emphasized the importance of the Assessor's "Homeowner Alert" program. This e-notification system is designed to protect property owners from real estate fraud and scams, which often increase in the aftermath of disasters when people are most vulnerable. The program alerts homeowners to any recorded changes in their property title, helping prevent unauthorized transfers or fraudulent activity.

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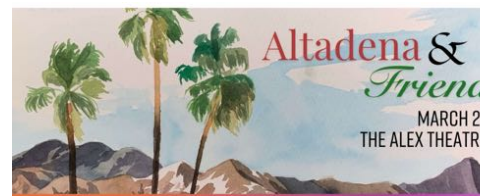
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## FIRE RELIEF CONCERT March 27



**Altadena & Friends Fire Relief Concert**  
The Eaton Fire devastated homes, businesses, and cultural landmarks, but our community is coming together to rebuild. Join us at the Alex Theatre on Thursday, March 27, for a 90-minute variety show featuring an extraordinary lineup of artists from the affected areas. 75% of funds raised go to Altadena Rotary Charities, and 25% go to the Altadena Town Council.  
Host a LiveStream party with your friends!  
**TICKETS ON SALE NOW!**  
(USE THE QR CODE)



### Attention 501(c) Nonprofit Organizations:

The Rotary Club of Altadena is now accepting applications for the Restore Altadena Grant Program, offering \$500 to \$5,000 in funding to support community projects that aid in Eaton Fire recovery efforts.

Who can apply?

- 501(c) nonprofit organizations
- Projects benefiting Altadena residents, businesses, services, and charities affected by the Eaton Fire
- Organizations may sponsor projects by individuals, businesses, or local government

First application deadline: March 31, 2025

Apply now:

<https://altadenarotary.org/?p=stories&storyid=287709>

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### Rotary in Taiwan

By Steve Kerekes



On our trip to Taiwan last month, my wife and I went biking with some friends on the Houli bikeway in the Feng-Yuen greenbelt in Taichung.

We came across this old train which had been painted and restored by the local Rotary Club. Here is a photo of the train - with Rotary symbol above the door!

### LAST WEEK AT THE CLUB:



Craig Cox leads the Club in song!

**New Donation Link:**  
[givebutter.com/EatonFireARC](https://givebutter.com/EatonFireARC)

Altadena Rotary

### MARCH 29 - SAVE THE DATE!



2025 Soirée

#### Celebrate With Us...

You are invited to our Soirée on March 29, 2025 at The University Club of Pasadena.



Join us and support children and families living in isolation to succeed in school and in life.

For additional information contact Liz Kwong - [Liz@FamiliesForwardLC.org](mailto:Liz@FamiliesForwardLC.org) or at 626-318-4936



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By President Maricela

### GIVEAWAY EVENT - A NOTE OF THANKS

Dear Rotarian volunteers and others,

Just a quick note to thank those who took the time to travel to Grocery Outlet last Saturday to assist in helping people in our community. About 685 families had registered for assistance at our drive

through and many more arrived later to "shop" in our pedestrian area.

We had give-away items from Shelter Box, Altadena Town Council, Altadena Rotary, Glendora Rotary, Grocery Outlet, St. Vincent de Paul, Rotary District 5300 clubs, LA County Library, Altadena Library and .... freshly-made burritos and prayers from Blue Tape Ministry!

With all of that, we were able to serve so many folks in need. But this was only possible because YOU traveled to Altadena to help others. We are so grateful for your Service above Self. On behalf of the Rotary Club of Altadena and our citizens, thank you.

*President Maricela Viramontes  
and the Community Giveaway Team*



*A special Thank You to Jose and Sandra Valenzuela for the use of their store for our event. Also to Rudy Hayek, President, RC of Glendora for the photos and the Glendora Rotary Club's outstanding support.*

***See you on Thursday - stay strong!***

## INTERNATIONAL SERVICE PROJECTS

By Sarah O'Brien

Last week, while in Asia on business, new member Frank Mayor was able to visit Cambodia. In addition to seeing Angkor Wat (and much more!) Frank made time to check out the projects that Altadena Rotary Club supports including sanitation and landmine clearance in the rural areas.



Cambodia Clean Water and Toilet Project (Global Grant)



Landmine-sniffing rats!

Altadena Rotary has supported the training of Cambodian self-help demining teams as well as the construction & maintenance of schools, once the land is clear & safe.

## Rotary Community Give Away: Another Successful Event!

By Brad Roeber, Club President-Elect

On Saturday, March 15th, after returning from out of State the night before, I witnessed another amazing event that reminded me of why I joined the Rotary Club of Altadena!



Under the leadership of Mark Mariscal, our Club Executive Secretary and the core planning group of Doug Colliflower, Jose and Sandra Valenzuela, Peter Huisling, Rene Amy and Sabrina Verduzco, this event went over smoothly and effectively. Pictured left:

Assemblymen Harabedian,

Jose Valenzuela, Captain Jabari Williams, Major General Jason Kelly and Sandra Valenzuela

In an attempt to focus on Fire Survivors from Altadena, this event did NOT have a flyer. The club specifically worked with the following groups to get the word out: 1) Altadena Town Council, 2) Eaton Fire Survivors Network, 3) St. Vincent De Paul St. Elizabeth non-denominational NGO, 4) Altadena Wild, and 5) Nextdoor via Rene Amy. The event did what one of our goals was: to get assistance to those who lived in Altadena. Rotary International has a long-time relationship with ShelterBox USA. They provided about 350 blankets and one thousand Air Purifiers from Intellipure. These were well received by the recipients. We also received, courtesy of Blue Tape Ministry, TEN pallets of new food from COSTCO. Grocery Outlet and Rotary purchased (some donated through vendors) fresh produce, bread, water, more food products, etc. We received new dresses from Nusatara, courtesy of Children of the Earth and other new shoes and clothing from St. Vincent De Paul LA Thrift Store. The Altadena Library Foundation, via the Library District provided another 100 hot spots that included 14 months of unlimited internet services. The LA County Library van was there, sharing information. Target Corporation provided \$2,000 in Gift Cards, the Pasadena Assistance League also contributed Gift Cards. And of course, the assistance of the Altadena Town Council and the wonderful work they have been doing for all of us over the last 9 weeks is appreciated. *(Cont'd opposite)*

*(Cont'd)* We had a visit by Rotary District Governor Michael Driebe, US Army Major General Jason Kelly, Assemblymember John Harabedian, representatives from LA County Supervisor Kathryn Barger and State Senator Sasha Perez. It was also nice to meet the CEO of ShelterBox USA, Kerri Murray, pictured below w/DG Mike Driebe, Mark and Assemblymember John Harabedian.



We had Rotary Club volunteers from 16 clubs, including a few people from Southern Nevada. The Pasadena Federal Credit Union sent volunteers who worked the whole day. And a special shout out to Pam and Scott MacDougall who drove down from the San Jose area to volunteer all day after hearing about our last event and how it made a difference in the community. As I said at the top of the story, I am a proud member of our club!