Rotary Club of Pasadena, CA

SPOKES NEWSLETTER

DISTRICT 5300 * Rotary Club 794 * April 10, 2026 * #01-060
www.pasadenarotary.com

THIS WEEK'S SPEAKER

David Zierler

Director of the Caltech Heritage Project

To Illuminate Nature: Caltech's Institutional Historian Reflects on 100 Years of Scientific Discovery in Pasadena

INTRODUCER: Paul Roach

David Zierler is the Ronald and Maxine Linde Director of the Caltech Heritage Project and Senior Strategist at the California Institute of Technology. As Caltech's institutional historian, David captures and conveys Institute history for campus and alumni communities. In addition, his work contributes to the operational and strategic needs of Caltech leadership. David was a Doctoral Fellow in history at Yale University, and he holds a PhD in the history of science from Temple University. He has published and taught widely on the relationship of international affairs and technology. Prior to his arrival at Caltech in 2021, David worked for eleven years as a historian at the US State Department, where he wrote and edited books on the history of American foreign relations. He was also employed at the American Institute of Physics, where his interviews of leading scientists added to the history collection at the Niels Bohr Library of Physics. His book "The Invention of Ecocide" is the standard study of the scientific controversy surrounding the use of Agent Orange in Vietnam. At the intersection of his love of science, history, and the personalities that inhabit these disciplines, Zierler has conducted over 1,000 oral histories with scientists over the course of his career.

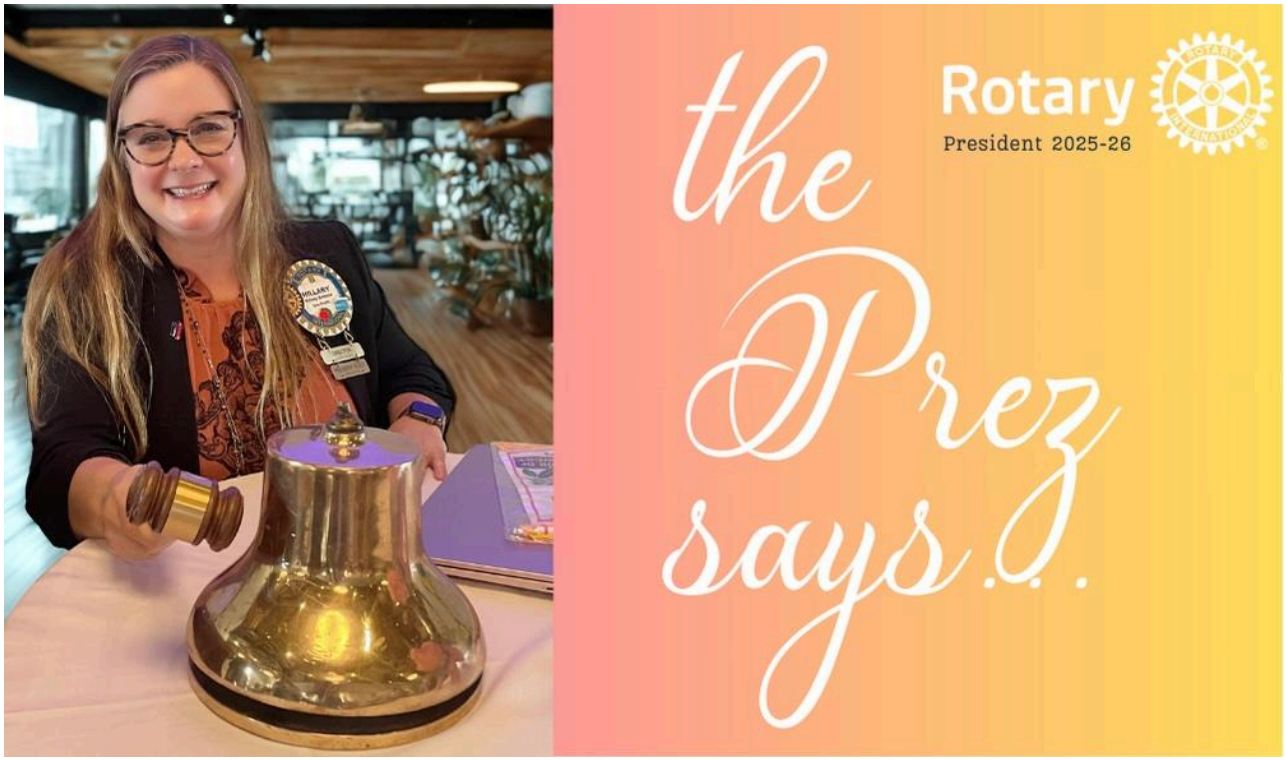
David lives in South Pasadena with his wife Aviva and their four children. He is an avid cyclist, a youth soccer coach, a Boy Scout leader, and an active member in the area's Jewish community.

WEDNESDAY – APRIL 15, 2026
UNIVERSITY CLUB OF PASADENA
LUNCH BUFFET: 12:00 PM - MEETING: 12:30 PM
175 N. Oakland Ave, Pasadena 91101
Non-members are welcome - $45.00 includes lunch
CLICK ON: ***RSVP*** ***- Deadline: 5:00 pm MONDAY***

OVERFLOW PARKING: Across street behind Pasadena Heritage
Enter parking off Madison Ave.
OKAY to park in reserved parking spaces
ADDITIONAL PARKING: 221 N. El Molino - Northwest corner of El Molino & Walnut.
2 block walk to UClub. Cost: $1.00/2 hours

Meeting Host: President Hillary Schenk
Reception: Alan Schier & Mike Bernard
Song Leader: Eric Olson
Lunchtime Pianist: Ann Louise Christensen
Inspiration: Josh McCurry
Scoot Zone Reporter: Dr. Sonya Sharifiard
Photographer: PE Tammy Silver
Technical: Frank Fish & Scott Carlson
Sergeant At Arms: PE-E Robert Lyons

Meeting is also on ZOOM opens at 12:15 pm
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86515101523?pwd=dHhNZnV5c2ZqbzNQbWthbDNhYTladz09
Meeting ID: 865 1510 1523
Passcode: 667356



When Third Grade Met Space: Chaos, Rockets, and a Bit of Trauma

There are moments in history that stay with us so vividly that we can recall not just what happened, but exactly where we were, right down to the desks, the voices, and even the feeling in the room.

For me, January 28, 1986, is one of those moments.

I was in elementary school, sitting in Ms. Lawson's classroom, surrounded by a group of wiggly third graders who were absolutely thrilled about a break from regular lessons. A TV had been rolled in on one of those tall carts, the kind every school seemed to have, and that alone was enough to make it a great day. In the 80s, a TV in the classroom basically meant, "Today is going to be amazing."

But this wasn't just any video. We were watching the launch of the Space Shuttle Challenger.

The excitement was contagious, not just because we were temporarily freed from spelling tests and worksheets, but because there was a teacher on board, Christa McAuliffe. To us, that made space feel just a little closer, a little more real. If a teacher could go to space, well, maybe someday one of us could too.

And then, in a moment, everything changed.

What followed is something many of us remember not just as an event, but as a feeling, confusion, silence, and the slow, heavy realization that something had gone terribly wrong. Even as children, we could sense the shift. Our teacher, who had been just as excited as we were moments before, suddenly didn't have answers, and in true 80s fashion, simply moved on to the next lesson as if we hadn't just witnessed something unimaginable on live television.

No processing circle. No counseling session. Just, "Okay class, take out your math books."

In the days that followed, life went on, as it does, but that moment stayed tucked away in our hearts. It became one of those quiet, shared experiences that connects a generation in a way that doesn't need much explanation.

And yet, time has a way of carrying us forward.

Decades later, many of us have once again found ourselves looking up, this time watching the launches of Artemis. The technology is more advanced, the missions more ambitious, and perhaps we are a little wiser. But there's still that same sense of wonder, and maybe just a hint of holding our breath.

Hillary S. Schenk
President 2025-2026
Rotary Club of Pasadena
cell 805.358.8596

ATTENDING THE MEETING MEALS & SEATS ARE PROVIDED

CLICK HERE TO RSVP TODAY

BASED ON *RSVP'S*.

ROTARY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS

53rd Annual Mayor's Interfaith Prayer Breakfast

SIGN UP FOR ROTARY'S ANNUAL TABLE

It looks like we may have 2 tables at the breakfast - sign up ASAP!

Thursday - May 7th from 7:30 am - 9:00 am at the Pasadena Convention Center
Cost: $45 - billed to your monthly account

PLEASE RSVP: *office@pasadenarotary.com*

Member Interest Survey!

Have fun and get involved. Pasadena Rotary has a lot of committees; committees to suit nearly every interest. But we don't know what YOU are interested in. Please complete this survey and let us know. Complete by Friday, April 17. Click the link here for the survey. Or scan the QR code.

MASTERS OF TASTE VOLUNTEER - SIGN UP HERE:

VOLUNTEER PORTAL LINK: *https://ushs.rosterfy.com/login*
email us at ***volunteer@ushs.or***g. For any questions (626) 715-5004.

VOLUNTEER NEED: Set Up from 8:00am - 12:00pm: Assist with posting vendor signs, setting up vendor booths, delivering supplies to booths, fill water jugs, assemble sanitation stations, and more!

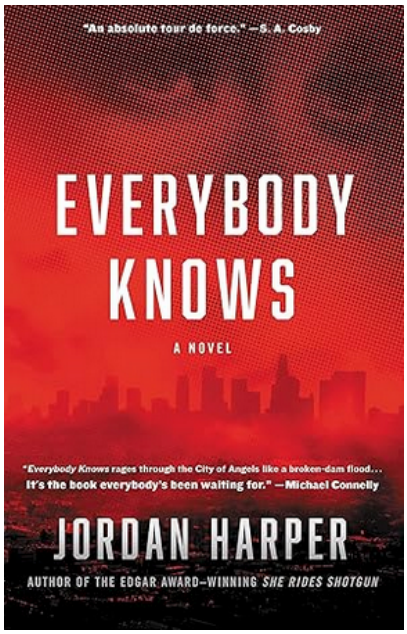
Volunteer Requirements

1. All volunteers must be at least 21 years old
2. Should be comfortable standing for extended periods of time and comfortable lifting up to 25 lbs
3. All volunteers will be asked to complete our volunteer requirements, including an online registration form, acknowledge our liability waiver, and complete our online orientation.

UNION STATION HOMELESS SERVICES

Volunteer Opportunity – Help Set Up for Masters of Taste, Union Station's Premier Fundraiser

When: Sunday, April 19, 8am to 12noon, Rose Bowl



ROTARY READERS

MONDAY - May 4th at 6:00 pm

On May 4 at 6 pm Rotary Readers will gather for Bill Opel's review of Everybody Knows by Jordon Harper.

Our host will be Martha Shenkenberg

Please RSVP to Martha Shenkenberg at ***mshenkenberg@yahoo.com.***

Please RSVP

Volunteer to help staff the 2026 Pasadena Showcase House for the Arts!

Enjoy this beautifully decorated house, support Showcase's mission to fundraise for the arts, and earn donations for our club in the process. For every shift completed by one of our members, Pasadena Rotary will receive $50.

KEY DETAILS

- Shifts are 3 and 1/2 hours long (inside or outside) and you must stand the whole time (other than during a 15 minute break for water/snacks/bathroom).
- Parking for volunteers is at Santa Anita Park with shuttles to and from the house. There will be no drop off in front of the house, but Santa Anita is only a 10 minute shuttle.
- Your job will be to greet guests, answer basic questions, and direct traffic through the house.
- If you complete TWO separate shifts, you will receive a **free ticket** to tour the Showcase House any day after 1:30 p.m.

If you'd like to volunteer, contact our coordinator, Amanda Pumilia. She will upload your information into the volunteer portal, send you available dates/times, and confirm and schedule your shift(s).

Email: apumilia@yahoo.com or text: (818) 693-0331

Shifts are available on Tuesdays - Sundays from April 19th to May 17th

9:00 - 12:30

12:30 - 4:00

4:00 - 7:00

The Scoot Zone

By Past President Mary Lou Byrne, Bureau Chief

Photos by Wendy Anderson and Tammy Silver

President Hillary Schenk rang the bell at 12:30 and turned things over to **Jonathan Edewards**. Accompanied by Ann Louise Christensen on piano and **Past President Mary Lou Byrne** on vocals, he led us in singing the classic “Almost Like Being in Love” from the musical *Brigadoon*, which was the topic of today’s speaker presentation. **Lisa Cavelier** gave a heartfelt inspiration about how the performing arts are vital to society, ending with this quote from Oscar Wilde: “I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being.”

Next up, we inducted a new member! **Past President Howard Raff** introduced **Geoff Baum**, who was co-sponsored for membership by Howard and **President Elect Tammy Silver**. Geoff is a nonprofit and communications leader who was a trustee of Pasadena City College, co founder of Linda Vista Communications, and a Senior Policy Fellow at the USC Annenberg’s Center on Communication Leadership and Policy. He lives in Pasadena with his wife and has two children.

After the new member had been properly greeted, newly deputized Sergeant at Arms **Paul Roch** helped introduce our guests, who were hosted by **Past President Howard Raff** and by our speaker Danny Feldman of the Pasadena Playhouse.

Announcements:
Dean Billman made a contribution to the Polio Pig and recognized **Jose Gomez** for his starring role in a recent PCC opera production. Bravo, Jose!
Past President Mary Lou Byrne urged everybody to contribute to two worthy causes at once by being a Rotary volunteer at the Pasadena Showcase House of Design. Details above.
Martha Shenkenberg asked for volunteers to help set up Union Station Homeless Services Masters of Taste event. Details above.
Past President Cory Brendel reported that the Nominating Committee met this week to select a slate of nominees for next year's Pasadena Rotary Board of Directors, and the election will be NEXT WEEK at our regular lunch meeting. Be there or be square.
George Falardeau pitched the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast on May 7 and asked those who wanted to attend to raise their hands and be instantly signed up. He got a good number of hands in the air, so Pasadena Rotary will be well represented. If you want to be added to the group, details are above.
President Elect Tammy Silver reminded us all to fill out the member interest survey so she can assign you to a committee of your liking for the coming Rotary year.
President Hillary made a donation to the polio pig and asked for support for Neighbors Empowering Youth, an Altadena STEM organization that our club donated to several years ago. This year they have qualified for the state level robotics competition and need $2,000 more in donations to finance their trip to the finals in Anaheim. Contact President Hillary at ***president@pasadenarotary.com*** for details.

Past President Mary Lou Byrne introduced our speaker. Producing Artistic Director Danny Feldman of the Pasadena Playhouse first spoke to our Club back in 2018, when he was brand new at the job and the Playhouse was facing significant challenges. Since then, he has turned things around in a big way. The Playhouse won a Tony Award for Best Regional Theater in 2023, and has more recently gone back to its roots as an educational institution, offering performing arts classes for children and adults of all ages.

Danny's topic was "Re-Imagining Brigadoon," a classic Lerner & Loewe musical that premiered on Broadway in 1947. Why does it need re-doing? "Some shows need a nip and tuck or a little bit of dusting," he explained.

If you haven't seen Brigadoon on stage, that's not surprising. Danny explained it's seldom produced any more. Why? "It's huge – a cast of more than 30, and an orchestra of 25-28

musicians. It hasn't been produced on Broadway since the 1980s and it probably never will be again, because it's too big and therefore too expensive."

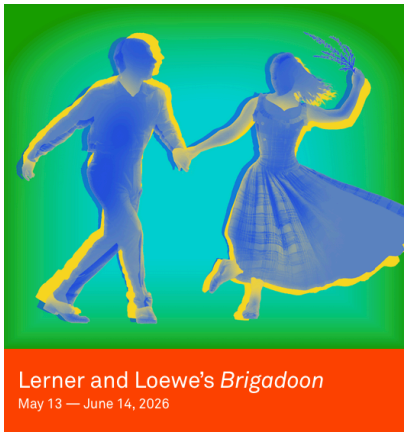
So why is the Pasadena Playhouse producing the show? Danny explained "To me it's a foundational show in American musical theatre." *Oklahoma*, which is widely considered the first modern American musical, premiered in 1945. *Carousel* followed the same year. And Brigadoon premiered on Broadway in 1947. "It's one of the main pillars of evolution of the American musical theatre," said Danny. And why is that important? The musical is one of our only uniquely American art forms. It is, said Danny, the art form of an immigrant nation. Lerner and Loewe, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Irving Berlin – they were all immigrants who brought their culture to America and mixed it with what they found here. The Pasadena Playhouse is committed to preserving that art form. Danny told us proudly (and a little sadly) that the Playhouse is one of the last theatres that still does its own productions of classic Broadway musicals. Moreover, he said, "we don't' just put on shows. We have conversations about what they mean."

And what does Brigadoon mean? Well, literally, he said, the word itself means "Bridge over [the river] Doon." And guess what? There is a real River Doon in Scotland, with a real bridge over it, and the image of that bridge will be included in the scenery for the upcoming production.

What is the story of Brigadoon? Danny explained we begin with two guys, Tommy and Jeff, on a trip to the Scottish Highlands. It's early morning and they're lost. They see some fog and a little village that is mysteriously not on their map. They walk into the village, and it looks like they've stumbled on a Renaissance Faire – everybody is all dressed up in old-timey clothes and is busy getting ready for a wedding.

WHAT IS GOING ON? It turns out Brigadoon is a magical village that only appears one day in every hundred years. This is the third day. And nobody can leave the village, or everybody will… disappear forever! Naturally, Tommy falls in love with the fair Fiona, one of the lassies in the village. What should he do?

Danny explained that Tommy's dilemma is a very American question: What do we choose to hold sacred while the world is rushing onward? This was a very relevant question in 1947, when the world had undergone tremendous change and the American identity was very much in question. Both in the outside world and in the show, people were caught between nostalgia and looking forward.



There's another big reason Danny wanted to produce Brigadoon: To honor its choreographer, Agnes de Mille. She also choreographed Oklahoma and Carousel, and she was the person responsible for putting storytelling in dance. Before she came along, dance on the Broadway stage was just… dance. Agnes de Mille was the one who made dance advance the story. And very fun fact: She got her start directing at the Pasadena Playhouse in the 1920s and 30s!

Danny explained that Agnes de Mille was a crucial collaborator on the shows she worked on. The composers would, for example, want to do a song about a big emotional moment, and she would say “That’s too trite. I’ll do it in a dance!” The Playhouse’s production of Brigadoon will incorporate Agnes de Mille’s choreography.

The Playhouse production will also preserve the original music. “We cut 16 bars of one song and are making two small tweaks to the lyrics, and that’s it,” said Danny. He did admit that there is one song he wants to cut, but the Lerner & Loewe estates are balking at the cut. “If we are successful in cutting it, I’ll tell you which one it is,” he said. “And if we have to leave it in, you’ll know which one should have been cut when you see the show.”

So what changes are being made? Most notably, Tommy and Jeff are from the present day, not 1947. Lerner & Loewe were writing contemporary heroes when they wrote the play, and updating to the present is consistent with that intent. They are also talking about why those two guys are on that trip to Scotland. But, Danny assured us, “we are keeping the ending.”

Also, Danny noted, the question arises “how do modern ears hear this script?” Turns out, he said, “there are some sexism problems.” And, most notably, they are changing the major supporting character of Mr. Lundy to Mrs. Lundy, and she will be played by Tyne Daly.

And finally, Danny announced that because it’s imperative that the audience experience the music as it was originally presented, “we are having the original 22-piece orchestra at a cost of $500,000!”

After a very lively and fun Q and A, **President Hillary** presented Danny with a pair of Rotary socks, and the meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

L2R: PP Cory Brendel, President Hillary, Peggy Kelley, Cindy Rude, PP Mary Lou Byrne, Gary Kearney, Danny Feldman,Justin Glasson, Scott Carlson

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

PHYLLIS CURRIE - April 10th

MIKE DAVIS - April 10th

LILY GOLDFARB - April 10th

KAREN HUDECEK - April 10th

DIANA SEDENQUIST - April 15th

HAPPY ROTAVERSARY

Rabbi Joshua Levine Grater	4/10/19	7 Years
Kevin Moore	4/15/15	11 Years

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

April 22nd - Dan Stover Instrumental Music Competition

April 29th - Teachers of Excellence Celebrations

May 6th - Nicole Craig, FIDM/Fashion Institute of Design and Marketing - The Business of Fashion

May 13th - Akila Gibbs, Executive Director Pasadena Senior Center - Stories from the Fire

May 20th - David Klug, City of Pasadena Economic Development Director

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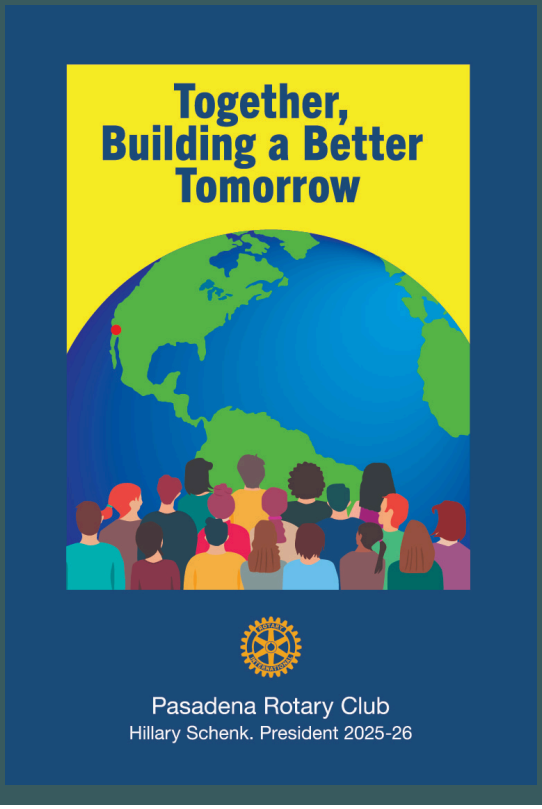

ROTARY CLUB OF PASADENA 2025-2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETS the 3rd Thursday of every month at 5pm - University Club of Pasadena

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Rotary Club of Pasadena

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