Rotary Club of Pasadena, CA

# SPOKES NEWSLETTER

DISTRICT 5300 * Rotary Club 794 * April 3, 2026 * #01-059
***www.pasadenarotary.com***

## *THIS WEEK'S SPEAKER*

## DANNY FELDMAN
### *Re-Imagining "Brigadoon"*

**INTRODUCER: Mary Lou Byrne**

Join Producing Artistic Director Danny Feldman as he shares the story of how Pasadena Playhouse is re-envisioning a classic of the American musical theatre for the twenty-first century.

Feldman joined Pasadena Playhouse as Producing Artistic Director in 2016, following his run as Executive Director at Labyrinth Theater in New York City. Under his leadership, the Playhouse has undergone a remarkable transformation, earning the 2023 Regional Theatre Tony Award.
Feldman has staged numerous memorable productions including *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, Holland Taylor's *Ann*, *La Cage aux Folles, Topdog/Underdog,* and most recently, a smash hit revival of *Amadeus*. As Pasadena Playhouse celebrates the centennial of its historic theater, it has achieved a remarkable milestone—after 55 years, the theater has regained ownership of its campus through the extraordinary generosity of the community.

Danny Feldman is deeply committed to making theater accessible to all, expanding education programs like Summer Theater Camps, Musical Theater Boot Camps for students, and producing theater for young audiences with productions like Pasek and Pauls' *Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile: The Musical*. His vision and leadership have revitalized the Playhouse, cementing its place as a community and cultural hub, and as the State Theater of California. More recently, the Playhouse has returned to its roots as a school of

theatre, offering classes for all ages from young children through senior citizens. After last year's devastating Eaton Fire, the Playhouse's Education Department offered free day camp sessions for children and youth affected by the fires and subsequent school closures.

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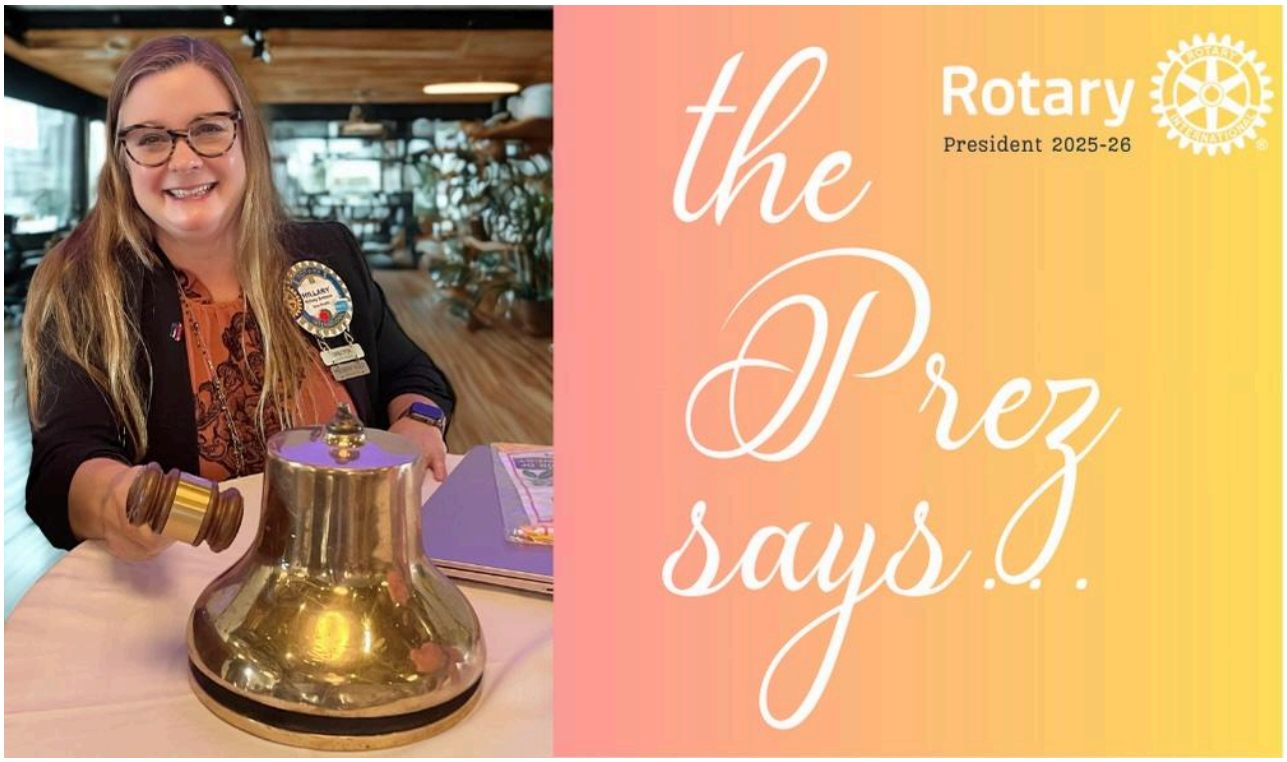
**WEDNESDAY – APRIL 8, 2026**
**UNIVERSITY CLUB OF PASADENA**
**LUNCH BUFFET: 12:00 PM - MEETING: 12:30 PM**
175 N. Oakland Ave, Pasadena 91101
***Non-members are welcome - $45.00 includes lunch***
CLICK ON: ***RSVP*** ***- Deadline: 5:00 pm MONDAY***

**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:** Jonathan Edewards
**Lunchtime Pianist:** Ann Louise Christensen
**Inspiration:** Lisa Cavelier
**Scoot Zone Reporter:** PP Mary Lou Byrne
**Photographer:** PE Tammy Silver
**Technical:** 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




## Freedom, Fellowship, and a Little Extra Matzah: A Passover Reflection

Each spring, just as we start to enjoy a little more sunshine (and maybe a few more reasons to get outside for service projects), our Jewish friends and neighbors celebrate Passover a holiday filled with meaning and memories.

At the center of Passover is the *Seder*, a special meal where stories are told, traditions are shared, and questions are very much encouraged especially from the youngest voices at the table. It's part history lesson, part family gathering, and part gentle reminder that no one gets through the evening without asking, "Why is this night different from all other nights?"

If you think about it, that question feels right at home in Rotary.

As Rotarians, we're always asking our own version of it: *How can we make things better? What can we do differently? Who needs a hand right now?* Whether it's a local project or a global initiative, we're constantly looking for ways to turn concern into action and maybe share a meal and a few laughs along the way.

Passover tells the story of a journey from hardship to freedom, but it also reminds us not to get too comfortable once we've made it to the other side. There's a long-standing tradition of leaving an empty seat at the table, a quiet symbol that there's always room for someone else, always more work to do, always another story to include.

We pride ourselves on being people of action, but also people of connection. We show up, we pitch in, and sometimes we even bring dessert. And while we may not all be observing Passover, its message is something we can all appreciate: that freedom, dignity, and opportunity are worth working for and worth sharing.

So as this season of renewal continues, maybe we take a small lesson from Passover: ask a few more questions, pull up an extra chair, and keep finding ways to serve with both purpose and heart.
And if you do find yourself at a Seder this year, just remember, the matzah may be a little dry, but the conversations are anything but.

*Chag Sameach and happy serving, Rotarians!*

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

**ATTENDING THE MEETING MEALS & SEATS ARE PROVIDED BASED ON *RSVP'S*.**

**CLICK HERE TO RSVP TODAY**

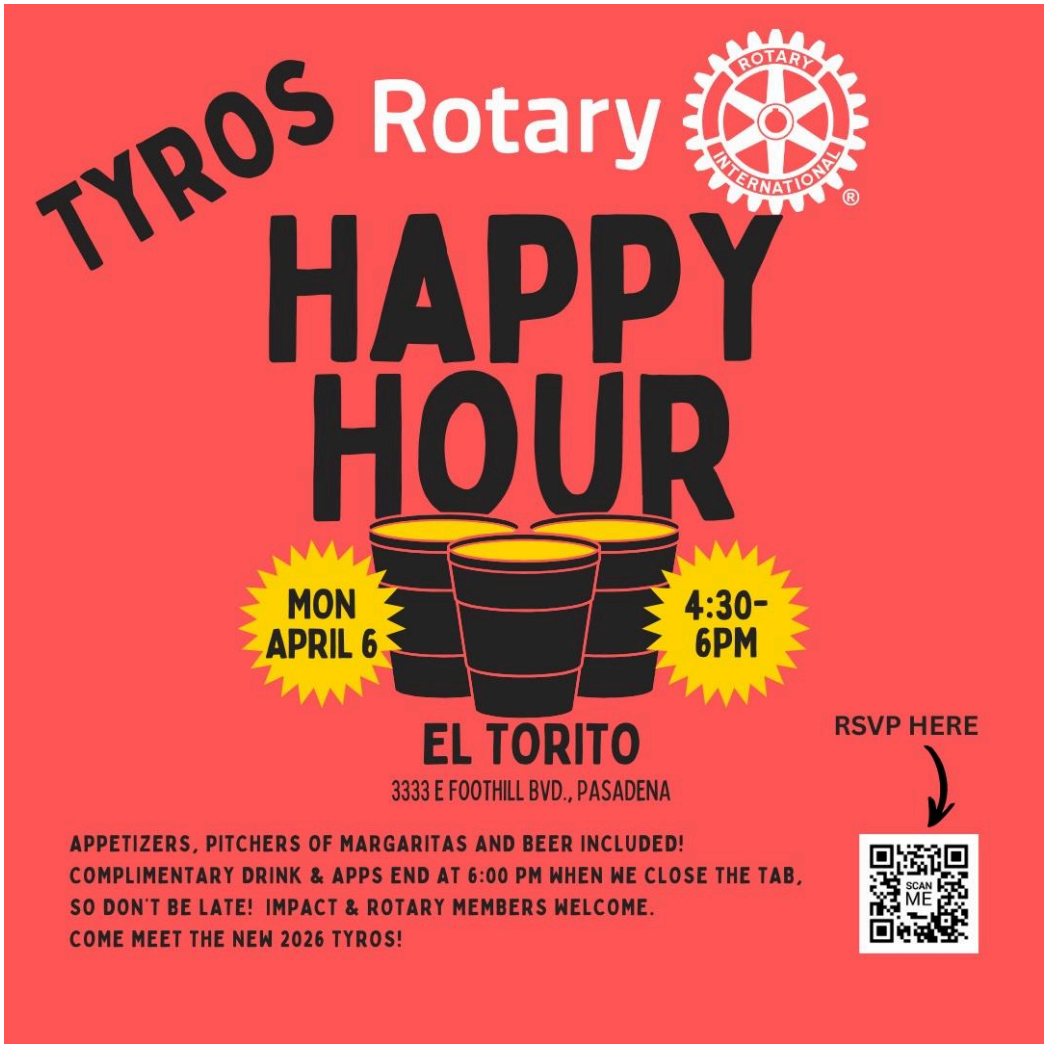
# ROTARY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS

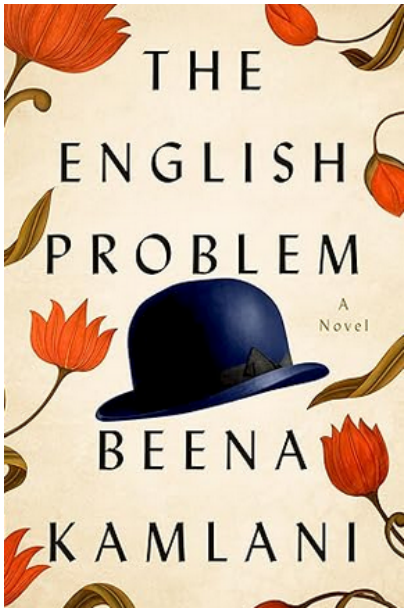
## 53rd Annual Mayor's Interfaith Prayer Breakfast

***SIGN UP FOR ROTARY'S ANNUAL TABLE***

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

**PLEASE RSVP: *office@pasadenarotary.com***




# ROTARY READERS

MONDAY - April 6th at 6:00 pm

Helen Baatz and Uma Shrivastava
will lead the discussion of
The English Problem by Beena Kamlani

Our host will be Colleen Carey
Please RSVP directly to Colleen at
***ccarey@lee-associates.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**

## PHOTO OF THE WEEK

The Hat Ladies - Venice Dunn and Holly Warren

# The Scoot Zone

## By Staff Reporter Nick Duretta

Photographers: PE Tammy Silver & Larry Weiss

Before a particularly large turnout, **President Hillary Schenk** rang the bell at 12:30, followed by **PP Mary Lou Byrne** leading everyone in a chorus of “God Bless America.” **Deb Lewis** gave the inspiration, reminding attendees of the opportunities to appreciate the wonders of nature as spring arrives, particularly in Pasadena, “a close-knit, generous and caring community of people who look out for one another.”

**PP Howard Raff** introduced two new members.
**Nabil Bisharat** was inducted as an active member. He is a managing partner and litigation lawyer at the law firm of Orsus Gate, which specializes in dispute resolution. A

huge soccer fan, Nabil is also a member of the Board of Trustees for La Salle College Preparatory in Pasadena.
**Devon Ogden** was inducted as an Impact member. She currently serves as the Community Engagement Director for Hovin Home in Pasadena, helping women overcome addiction and trafficking. She also serves as CEO of a nonprofit organization in Rwanda.

**Announcements**
**PP Cory Bendel** asked all members in attendance to fill out the distributed ballots to vote for up to three people to join the nominating committee as members at large. Popularly known as NomCom, this committee also includes past, present, and future Rotary presidents and will decide upon a slate of nominees for next year's Pasadena Rotary Board of Directors. (Elected were **Paul Roach, Robert Lyons**, and **Colleen Carey**)

**George Falardeau** announced the Mayor's Interfaith Prayer Breakfast on May 7 at the Pasadena Convention Center. *(To rsvp see flyer above*)

Many guests were in attendance: **George Falardeau** introduced Vannina de la Cuba, Phlunte Riddle, Lisa Derderian, and Eddie Rivera. **Howard Raff's** guests were Julius Barada and Dee Jones. **Armida Baylon's** guest was Brian Cox. **Sandi Mejia** introduced her guests Jeanette O'Malley, Brad MacNeil, Chiara Tellini, Andy Tornat and Elissa Barrett. **PE Tammy Silver's** guests were Tim Wendler and her sister Holly Warren. **Bob Risley** was accompanied by his wife Rosemary, and **PP Phil Miles** by his wife Shelley. **Jeannine Bogaard's** guest Nancy Carol Iguanzo and **Cyrus Afshin's** guest Mins Radd.

**George Falardeau** introduced this week's speaker, Pasadena mayor **Victor Gordo**. Gordo, who immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico at a young age, earned his law degree and served on the Pasadena City Council before being elected mayor in 2020 of what he calls "the greatest city anywhere, the center of the universe."

His tenure as mayor has seen him deal with a number of challenges and crises. "Right after I was elected, the world shut down," he says. Besides seeing the city through the COVID epidemic, Gordo has dealt with social justice issues, economic uncertainty, the Eaton fire, and immigration enforcement.

One of Gordo's administration's most significant accomplishments is the investment the city has made in becoming a medical technology center. In the past five years, more than 300 medical technology firms have established a presence in Pasadena. Gordo has

presided over expansion and improvements at the Rose Bowl, Pasadena Convention Center, Central Library and YWCA.

Currently Gordo says his administration's top priorities are fire prevention, roadway improvement, sheltering the homeless, making the city carbon-free by 2030, and implementing an economic development strategic plan. Another focus is the development of the fifty acres surrounding the terminus of the 710 freeway.

Looking forward, Gordo said one of his goals is to address the divisions within our community. "We have lost sight of our common humanity. I want us all work to restore that common humanity, not only in our city, state, and country, but in the world."

To read more about Mayor Gordo's speech, check out this article in Pasadena Now: **Mayor Frames Pasadena's Future Through Years of Crisis and Recovery – Pasadena Now**

After presenting the speaker with a pair of Rotary socks, **President Hillary** adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

*L2R: George Falardeau, Phlunte Riddle, PP Cory Brendel (standing), Lisa Derderian, President Hillary, Paul Roach, Eddie Rivera, Vonnia De La Cuba, Mayor Victor Gordo*

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

**KARL BROOK - April 3rd**

**ROYCE GILDER - April 4th**

**CATHERINE HASKETT HANY - April 9th**

**STEWART ESPINOSA - April 8th**

## HAPPY ROTAVERSARY

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Fred Findley | 4/5/17 | 9 Years |
| Phyllis Crandon | 4/6/16 | 10 Years |
| Bridget Lawlor | 4/8/25 | 1 Year |
| Bill Opel | 4/9/75 | 51 Years |

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

April 15th - David Zierber, Director of the Caltech Heritage Project - To Illuminate Nature: Caltech's Institutional Historian Reflects on 100 Years of Scientific Discovery in Pasadena

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 King, City of Pasadena Economic Development Director

**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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**Chair/Publisher/Editor: Wendy Anderson**

**Scoot Zone Reporter: Mary Lou Byrne, Nick Duretta & Sonya Sharififard**

**Photographers: Tammy Silver & Photo Team: Hans Rosenberger, Larry Weiss & Paul Roach. Back-up: PP Ken Joe**
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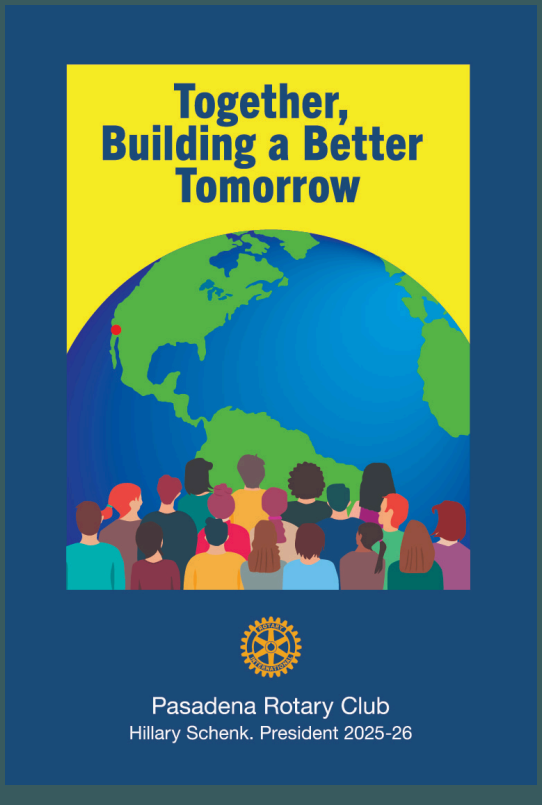


**ROTARY CLUB OF PASADENA 2025-2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
**MEETS the 3rd Thursday of every month at 5pm - University Club of Pasadena**

**PRESIDENT: Hillary Schenk**
**PRESIDENT ELECT: Tammy Silver**
**SECRETARY: Wende Lee**
**TREASURER: Allison Burgos**
**CLUB DIRECTORS: Don Andrues, Mike Bernard, George Falardeau, Frank Fish, J.P. Harris, Debi Kroman, Robert Lyons, David McAlexander, Deb Raupp, Nevino Rocco, Alan Schier, Dede Venkat**
**Non-Voting Member: Amanda Pumilia, Chair, The Impact Club**

## Rotary Club of Pasadena

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