Rotary Club of Pasadena, CA

SPOKES NEWSLETTER

DISTRICT 5300 * Rotary Club 794 * August 1, 2025 * #01-028
www.pasadenarotary.com

THIS WEEK'S SPEAKER

DR. SARA SAFARI – *Climb Your Everest*

INTRODUCER: David McAlexander

Dr. Sara Safari is an award-winning author, speaker, college professor, mountain climber, and advocate for women's empowerment. Known for her historic journey to become the first Iranian woman to climb the Seven Summits, Dr. Safari's life changed dramatically when she survived an avalanche on Mount Everest triggered by a massive earthquake. This life-altering experience deepened her resolve to inspire others to face their own challenges with courage and determination.

A passionate advocate, Dr. Safari is the founder of "Climb Your Everest," a nonprofit dedicated to empowering marginalized young women through education, and helping them realize their potential and overcome adversity. Her mission and story are also featured in the Netflix documentary "Aftershock." In addition to her nonprofit work, Dr. Safari's contributions have been recognized by the United Nations Association with the Global Citizen Award, and by the International Leadership Association with the Outstanding Practice with Broad Impact award.

Her speaking topics resonate with leaders and teams across industries, offering insights on resilience, leadership, and creating a purpose-driven life. Through her talks and books, including "Follow My Footsteps" and "Above the Mountain Shadow," Dr. Safari continues to inspire audiences to climb their own "Everests" and make an impact in their communities.

WEDNESDAY – AUGUST 6th, 2025

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

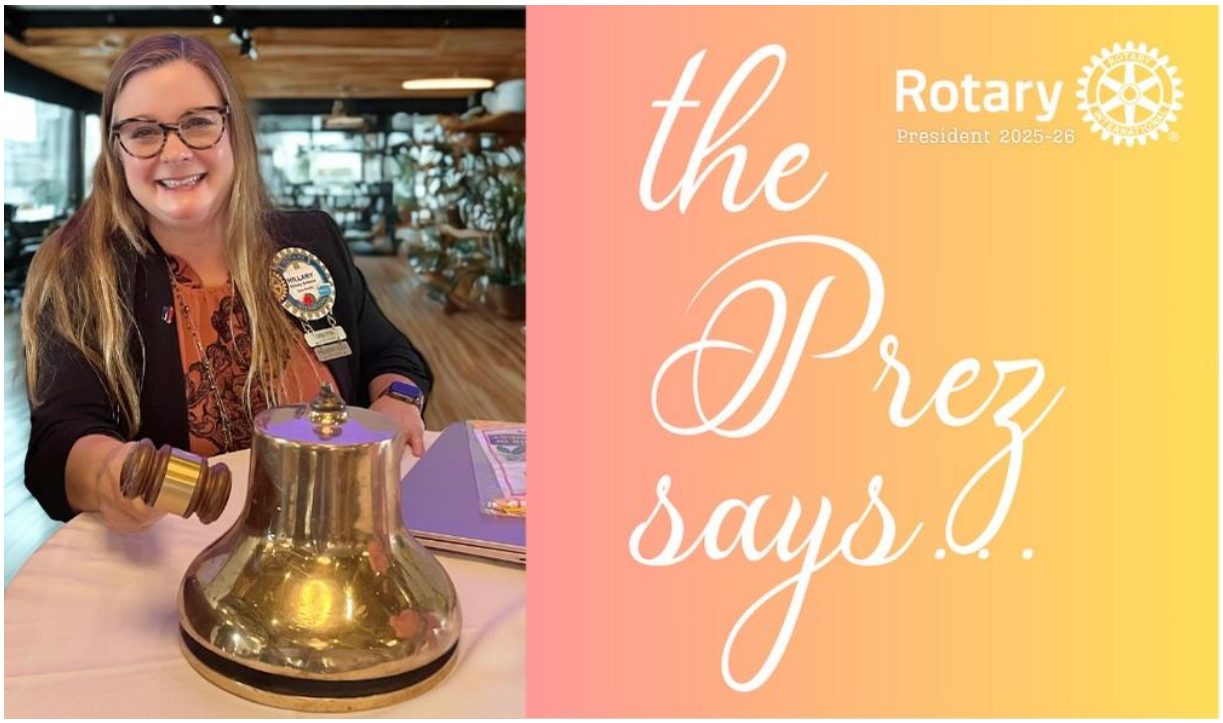
OVERFLOW PARKING: Pasadena Heritage Blinn House
Enter parking off Madison Ave. - Do not park in any reserved parking space

Meeting Host: President Hillary Schenk
Reception: Alan Schier & Mike Bernard
Song Leader: Eric Olson
Lunchtime Pianist: Ann Louise Christensen
Inspiration: Peggy Kelley
Scoot Zone Reporter: PP Mary Lou Byrne
Photographer: PE Tammy Silver & Gui Bittencourt
Technical: Frank Fish & Scott Carlson
Sergeant At Arms: Robert Lyons

Meeting is also on ZOOM opens at 12:00 pm

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86515101523?pwd=dHhNZnV5c2ZqbzNQbWthbDNhYTladz09

Meeting ID: 865 1510 1523. - Passcode: 667356



The Power of Fellowship in Rotary

At the core of Rotary's global mission lies a simple, yet profound principle: Fellowship. It's more than just camaraderie or friendly

banter before meetings — it's the powerful bond that unites us in service, strengthens our resolve, and multiplies our impact in the community and around the world.

As our meeting ended yesterday, it truly filled my heart to see so many of you taking the time to engage — with each other and with our guests. Those moments of laughter, conversation, and genuine connection are what make our club feel like home. In a world that moves fast and often demands so much of us, your time and compassion are among the greatest gifts you can give.

Our ability to serve is rooted in our ability to connect — with each other and with those we aim to help. That connection is what makes Rotary not just an organization, but a global family — one that supports, uplifts, and grows together.

We have some great opportunities for connection and fellowship coming up, and I truly encourage each of you to attend when you can. Whether it's a social gathering, a hands-on service project, or a club meeting with guest speakers, every event is a chance to deepen relationships and strengthen the heart of our club.

Let's continue to make space for fellowship — because it's through those small moments of connection that we build something truly lasting.

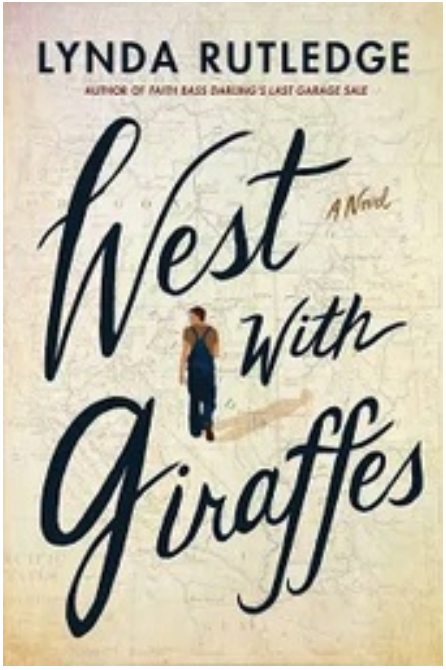
Hillary S. Schenk
President 2025-2026
Rotary Club of Pasadena
President@pasadenarotary.com
805-358-8596

CLICK HERE TO
RSVP TODAY

ATTENDING THE MEETING - MEALS & SEATING ARE PROVIDED BASED ON THE RSVP'S WE RECEIVE

BUFFET opens at 12:00 pm - MEETING starts at 12:30 pm

ROTARY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS

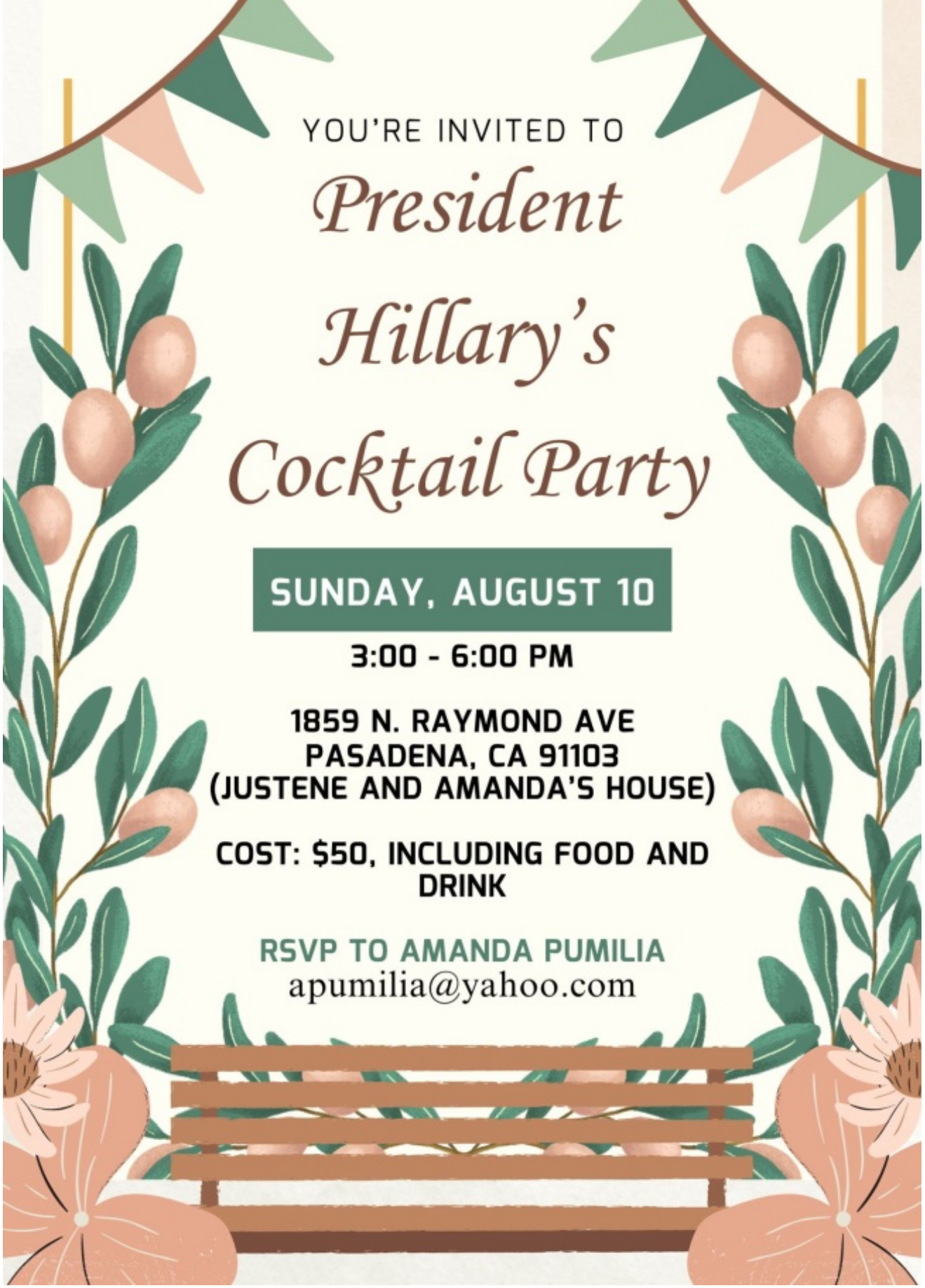


ROTARY READERS

Rotary Readers voted for a great line up of books starting with our September read through August 2026.

If you can host 12 to 15 people, please email Cathy Simms at simmsie1@pacbell.net with the month you can host. May and June are set.

On August 4 at 6 pm Bob Risley will lead the discussion of West With Giraffes by Lynda Rutledge.



Service Project - Fruit Harvesting with Food Forward

Volunteer for Awesome Orange Harvest at The Huntington

Saturday, August 16 from 9:00 - 11:00 am - 5 volunteers needed! To volunteer, sign up and complete the waiver at this link: *https://community.foodforward.org/events/33615?group_id=410*

Project info: We need **5 volunteers** to harvest food, fight hunger, and build community! We will harvest beautiful, fresh fruit that would otherwise go to waste and donate 100% to local hunger relief organizations.

Join Food Forward at the Huntington Gardens on **Saturday, August 16 from 9:00 - 11:00 am** to help us harvest as much fruit as possible from trees, and then pack it into boxes to be donated. Volunteers should be comfortable harvesting and carrying boxes of fruit that may weigh up to 20 pounds. Volunteers don't need to worry about bringing equipment or transporting the fruit. This opportunity is open to volunteers 5 years old and older, though children under 16 years old must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Please check out the **Volunteer FAQ page** on Food Forward's website to learn more about what to expect at volunteer events.

For more information, contact Impact Chair Amanda Pumilia at *apumilia@yahoo.com*.

ROTARIANS 'ON THE NIGHT' WITH ANGEL CITY FOOTBALL CLUB GAME

Have a fun evening cheering on Angel City Football Club with fellow Rotarians. We have a block of seats right above the spirited Supporters' Section. **Goooooooal!** One row will be padded leather seats and the row above are high-top stools in front of a small countertop. All seats include beer, wine, soda, water, nachos, popcorn, and hot dogs.

Date: Thursday, September 18
Game Time: 7:30pm
Place: BMO Stadium, 3939 S. Figueroa St., Los Angeles
Cost: $80/ticket
RSVP: Tammy Silver, tamaramsilver@gmail.com

The Scoot Zone

By Staff Reporter Dean Billman

Photographers: PE Tammy Silver & Gui Bittencourt

Today's meeting was in recognition of our new Paul Harris Fellows. Besides the forty club members who received the honor, we also welcomed our newest community Paul Harris honorees, the Pasadena Fire Department, the Pasadena Police Department, and US Justice Department, Bureau of ATF and Special Agent Blake MacLearnsberry for their extraordinary service during the Eaton Fire on January 7-8, 2025. As Police Chief Gene Harris said, "Game recognizes Game" when it comes to Service Above Self, our Rotary Motto.

As we arrived today, several Tyros members were there to greet us:**Cedrick Jihanian, Peggy Kelley, Sneha Villalva, Nick Duretta**. **Alan Schier,** and **Leslie Bernard** were helping sign in our guests, expertly coordinated by Mike Bernard.

President Hillary Schenk rang the Big Brass Rotary Bell at 12:30 pm and asked Song Master and Board Member **Don Andrues** to lead Ann Louise Christensen and The Mighty Four Way Test Singers as we sang the Beatles' "With a Little Help From My Friends." **PP Phil Miles** was especially happy with a Beatles song.

Jonathan Edewards gave us his inspiration, noting our new community honorees, "Courage is not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it" – Nelson Mandela – and that courage lies in acting despite that fear, not in being fearless.

Guests:

· **Wende Lee** jumped up and introduced Ms. Leslie Bernard (Mike Bernard's wife who helped sign in our special guests today) as "Mike's adorable wife" before Mike could introduce her, to which he remarked "I'm Leslie's adorable husband."

Announcements (see invitation details above):

· **Amanda Pumilia**, Chair of our Rotary Impact Club, announced sign-up sheets for the Presidential Cocktail Party at her and PP Justene Adamec's home.

· **Amanda** also invited us to do some of the Service Above Self stuff – Picking fruit at the Huntington Gardens (exotic fruit?) for a good cause. She needs five volunteers – it will be fun!

· **PP Justene Adamec** is leading our Social Media group, and encourages us "if you see a Rotary Shield sign, take a picture of it and send it in" so we can share the impact of Rotary. If you are shy, you can opt-out of having your face on the webpage – no questions asked. Sometimes "fame is a heavy burden" (Voltaire).

· **PP Cathy Simms**, co-chair with **Jan Sanders**, announced the Rotary Book Club 2025-2026 choices are in, and she invites us to join them – they need houses to host. **PP Diana Peterson-More** whispered to me that the next meeting is at Helen Baatz house.

· Board Member **David McAlexander** announced the San Marino annual car show on Sunday, August 24th, and if we volunteer to help them you will get entrance for free.

· **PP Ken Hill** reported that **PP Mel Cohen** was suffering from a kidney issue and hospitalized lately – "It was so bad that Mel didn't offer any hospital nurse jokes – that's how serious this is!" The club was abuzz with concern, so hope you get better, Mel! He should be home soon.

President Hillary welcomed **PP Mike Farrand** to the lectern, as he was wearing his official Paul Harris green jacket, and he gave a short history of the Paul Harris Fellow Society. A long-loyal late member, George Cassett, organized our club's award presentation every year (he started the green jacket tradition of wearing it on his presentation days), and for every $1,000 contribution to Rotary International Foundation, that gets you a membership in the Society. The RI Foundation then uses the money for good works worldwide, and some of the money comes back to the local club. One of our Pasadena Club projects have been PP Shel Capeloto's Caring Little Hearts ten years ago, surgeries for newborns born with congenital heart defects – we have saved over 600 babies with lifesaving surgeries. We have also spent millions of dollars to try to eradicate the polio virus worldwide. We have gone from hundreds of new infections per year to now only 13 year to date worldwide.

This year's members who attained the Paul Harris Fellow Society are:**PP Justene Adamec, Wendy Anderson, Helen Baatz, PP Christle Balvin, Mark Batatian, Mike Bernard, PP Cory Brendel, PP Mary Lou Byrne, Sean Cain, PP Shel Capeloto,**

Colleen Carey, Scott Carlson, Phylis Crandon, Ariel Drachenberg, Frank Fish, PP Rob Fisher, PP John Foulkes, Sandy Goodenough, John Gordon, Russ Guiney, JP Harris, Angela Hawkotte, Phil Hawkey, Tamia Hope, Gary Kearney, Debi Kroman, Debbie Loveland, David McAlexander, PP Kathy Meagher, PP Phil Miles, Jan Moscaret, Phyllis Mueller, Eric Olson, Jim Osterling, PP Diana Peterson-More, Marsha Rood, Jan Sanders, PP Cathy Simms, Ellen Simon, Fred Soldwedel, Eszylfie Taylor and Judy Taylor.

PP Mike yielded the podium to **Catherine Haskett-Hany**, co-chair of the event and leader of the Community Paul Harris Fellow Award. She and her committee nominated and chose the entire Pasadena Police Department and Pasadena Fire Department for their heroic efforts during the Eaton Fire disaster in January 2025, and they singled out two individuals:

- Pasadena Fire Investigation Unit Captain Trey Sorensen
- U.S. Justice Department, Bureau of ATF and Special Agent Blake R. MacLearnsberry

Police Chief Gene Harris personally thanked our club for this honor on behalf of all the First Responders, sharing that January 7th was his birthday, and he had one bite of his birthday cake when the call came in that the wind event (100 mph + winds) was turning into a catastrophe quickly. Due to the wind, there was no air support, and he exclaimed, “The Pasadena Fire Department is pretty awesome” and that the mutual aid from other cities and counties sharing their services showed that there might be a shortage of equipment, “but there was no shortage of commitment.”

He singled out Special Agent MacLearnsberry and Unit Captain Sorensen. Unit Captain Sorensen was the first person to determine that the Senior Center in Altadena had to be evacuated immediately – the Jewish Synagogue next door was soon engulfed in flames. Special Agent MacLearnsberry, who at first sight of fire, moved his own family down the hill to safety, then went back up the hill to help with evacuation of the Senior Center in Altadena, even though a city-wide “Shelter In Place” advisory had gone out. Their quick action during the evacuation in the middle of the firestorm helped save over 290 seniors, just before the home went up in flames (we all saw the live television footage as the parking lot next door was full of invalid seniors, too weak to walk, bundled into any van or bus amidst the firestorm of 100 mph sparks and smoke too thick to breathe). Unit Captain Sorensen and Special Agent MacLearnsberry organized the first responders and citizens to get the people to safety at the Pasadena Civic Center, which was organized by the City

in minutes.

Meanwhile, firefighters were trying to save as many lives as they could – sparks at 100 mph travel over two miles away in minutes, and everything caught on fire all around them, all at once. The police backed up the firefighters, all coordinated by Unit Captain Sorensen, who had both the firefighter radios and the police radios, which run on different systems – he had the ability to see and hear both systems and helped coordinate the rescues of thousands of people fleeing the fire, the firefighters trying to get water, and the police trying to evaluate an entire city, all the while racing in front of a wall of flame and dense smoke, with winds shifting dramatically.

Each Chief could not say enough about each other's team – "the Pasadena Fire Department had our backs" said Police Chief Harris, and Fire Chief Augustin said the takeaway was "The value of relationships – the force multiplier."

An awardee guest, Kenneth Copper, Special Agent in Charge at the ATF, said that all first responders deserve psychological support for the trauma they have been through, and that Special Agent MacLearnsberry's wife continues to be terrified about moving back to a fire zone. Considering that he put his life on the line to save others, he has been recognized by his agency for his outstanding heroism.

But, as Chief Harris said, they all are very grateful for today's recognition – they all personally were recognized within their departments for their heroic actions, but it is special to be seen and recognized by their served community – and we say Thank You, too.

Front row (I to r)
Police Commander Marcia Taglioretti, Fire Chief Chad Augustin, U.S. Justice Department, Bureau of ATF and Special Agent in Charge of the Los Angeles Field Division (Head of ATF in Southern California) Kenneth Cooper, U.S. Justice Department, Bureau of ATF and Special Agent Blake R. MacLearnsberry, Fire Investigation Unit Captain Trey Sorensen, Police Chief Gene Harris, Civilian Commander Karen Peterson, Management Analyst V Kimberly Siemen
Second row (I to r)
Deputy Chief of Police Arthur Chute, Police Jail Administrator Robert Guillen, Commander Sean Dawkins, Deputy Fire Chief Tim Sell,

President Hillary concluded the session with a poem she called “Boots, Badges & Big Hearts” (her husband and his twin brother are both first responders), closing with, “So here’s a hearty Rotary thank you to the men and women in boots and badges. You inspire us, you keep us safe – and if you ever need help organizing park clean up, we’ve got you covered.”

She then had everyone line up for a photo op, and each Paul Harris Fellow member received her trademark Rotary socks – “so you can always walk in Rotary.”

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

Nick Duretta	August 1
Allen Webb	August 3
Kevin Moore	August 5

HAPPY ROTAVERSARY!!

Peter Boyle	8/1/93	32 Years
Allison Burgos	8/1/23	2 Years
Frank Cardenas	8/1/24	1 Year
Tammy Duke	8/1/23	2 Years
Bernadette Espinoza	8/1/23	2 Years

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

August 13, 2025 - Robert Shoji - When Little Tokyo was Bronzeville
August 20, 2025 - Dowell Myers - How We Got to Today's Housing Crisis

August 27, 2025 - Katy Smith - Sterns - The Business and Beauty of a Charcuterie Board
September 3, 2025 - Joy Chen - Eaton Fire Survivors Network
September 10, 2025 - The Courage Awards - LA County District Attorney's Office
September 17, 2025 - Katie Hill - Union Station Homeless Services
September 24, 2025 - District 5300 Governor Gilda Moshir - The Latest From Rotary

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: Tammy Silver & Gui Bittencourt.
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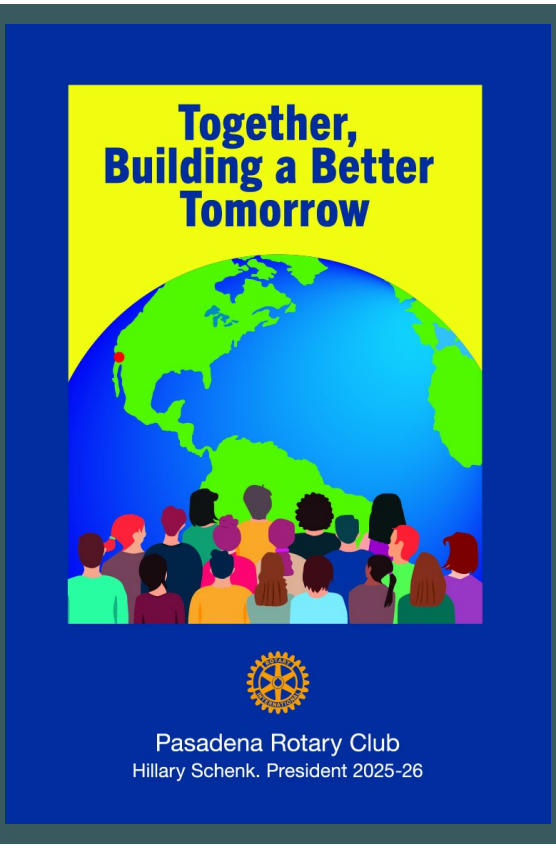
Graphic Design: Wende Lee

Proofers: Kathy Meagher & Amanda Pumilia



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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