Rotary Club of Pasadena, CA

SPOKES NEWSLETTER

DISTRICT 5300 * Rotary Club 794 * May 8, 2026 * #01-064
www.pasadenarotary.com

THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

AKILA GIBBS
Executive Director, Pasadena Senior Center

Stories from the Fire You Have Never Heard

Akila Gibbs has devoted herself to the issues associated with our aging population. She began her career in television news as an award-winning journalist for 16 years. She transitioned to the nonprofit sector working as Director of Public Relations for the Alzheimer's Association.

In 2008, Akila joined the Pasadena Senior Center as Executive Director were she continues to lead the organization to help meet the growing needs of older adults in our community. She is an active member of Pasadena Rotary, serves on the boards of Huntington Hospital, The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens, and Westridge School for Girls.

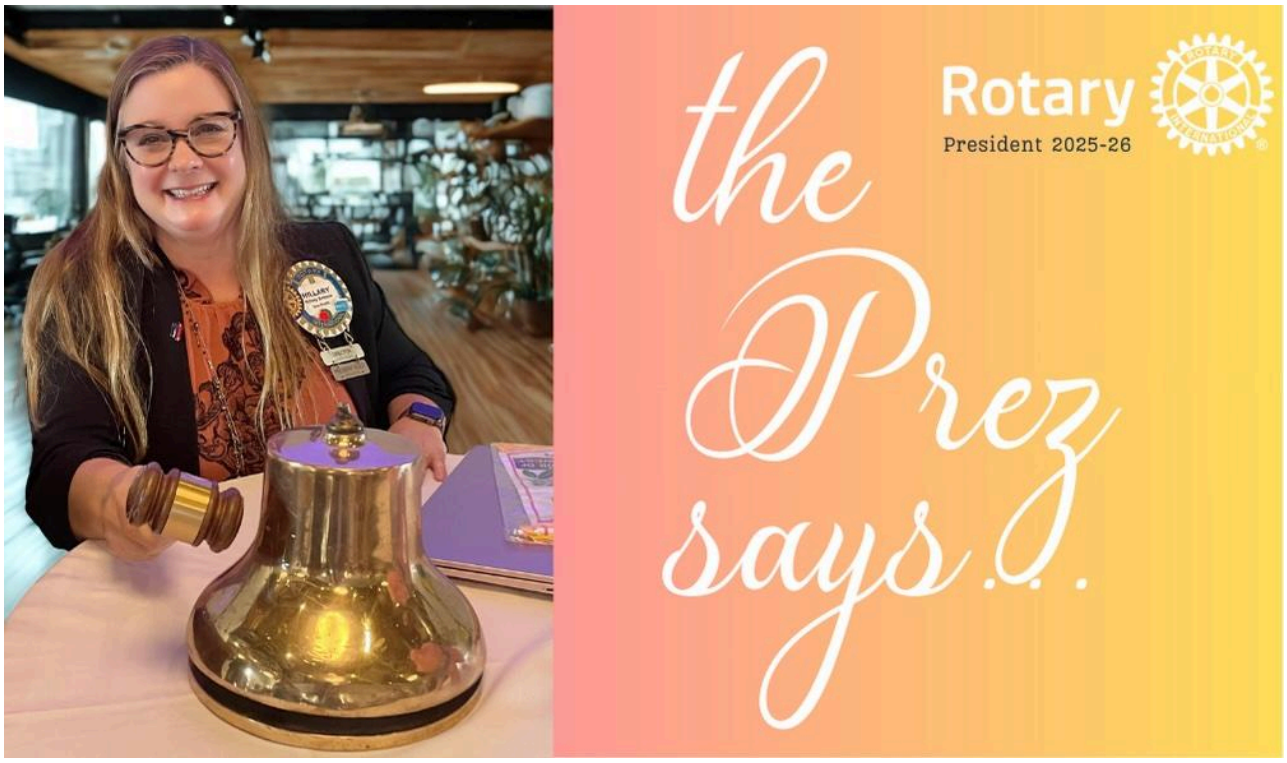
Akila was one of California Senator Carol Lui's 25th Senate District 2015 Women of the Year and was also presented with the Junior League of Pasadena's 2016 Community Impact Award. Akila and her husband, Albert, have two adult children.

WEDNESDAY – MAY 13, 2026
UNIVERSITY CLUB OF PASADENA
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: PP Mel Cohen
Scoot Zone Reporter: PP Mary Lou Byrne
Photographers: PE Tammy Silver & Marisol Perez
Technical: Frank Fish
Sergeant At Arms: PE-E 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



Sunshine, Sand, and Rotary Friendship

This week, President Elect Tammy graciously stepped in and did a beautiful job leading our Rotary meeting. Tammy, thank you for keeping everything running so smoothly and for bringing your signature warmth, kindness, and energy to the room. You made it all look effortless, which we all know usually means someone worked very hard behind the scenes (Wendy Anderson)!

I also wanted to share a personal note with my Rotary family. My father in law passed away last week, and it has been a tender and emotional time for our family. Even so, we decided to move forward with our previously planned trip to Florida to visit my daughter,

my mother, and my stepfather. In many ways, it turned out to be exactly where we needed to be.

Florida welcomed us with sunshine, warm breezes, sandy beaches, and enough humidity to remind me why hairspray exists. There was comfort in hearing the ocean, feeling the sand between our toes, and simply being together. Sometimes healing looks a lot like sitting outside with family, laughing over dinner, and watching pelicans act like they own the place.

One of the sweetest parts of the trip was staying in my daughter's apartment for the very first time. There is something so special, and slightly surreal, about seeing your child fully settled into her own adult life. I found myself looking around thinking, "She has throw pillows, matching towels, and groceries that are not just coffee creamer and string cheese." I was incredibly proud of the life she is building and grateful to share a little piece of it with her.

Thank you all for your friendship, support, and kindness. Rotary has always been so much more than meetings and service projects. It is a community that shows up for one another through life's celebrations, challenges, heartbreaks, and joys, and I am deeply thankful to be part of it.

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

Notice of Lunch Fee Increase

Dear Rotary Members,
As much as we tried to convince the University Club that "service above self" should include discounted lunches, reality has finally caught up with us.

Effective June 1st, the Rotary lunch fee will increase from $135 to $150.

This adjustment helps bring us more in line with the actual cost of meals and allows us to continue enjoying great food, fellowship, and lively weekly meetings without having to switch to peanut butter sandwiches and tap water.

We truly appreciate your understanding and continued support of our club. Rotary is about community, connection, and making a difference — preferably over a decent lunch.
Thank you for being part of what makes our club special.

Hillary S. Schenk

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

CLICK HERE TO RSVP TODAY

ROTARY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS

Rotary Club of Pasadena Community Paul Harris Fellow Award Nomination Form

Each year a recipient for the Community Paul Harris Fellow Award is selected by the Awards Committee. The individual selected shall be from within the Pasadena community and not a current member of Pasadena Rotary. Organizations, groups and clubs are not eligible to receive the award. Nominees should exemplify the qualities and ideals of Rotary and “Service Above Self,” be active in community affairs, and be known in the business community as one who follows the “Four-Way Test.”

The Rotary Club of Pasadena Foundation will make a contribution of $1,000 in the recipient’s name to the Rotary Foundation, enabling them to receive the Paul Harris Fellow recognition. The recipient of this year’s award will be honored at an awards luncheon sponsored by the Rotary Club of Pasadena on Wednesday, June 3, 2026.

Submit the completed nomination form and support information by Friday, May 8, 2026

For more information and an applicaton form at our website:
https://www.pasadenarotary.com/home/paul-harris-fellow-award/

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

Pasadena Rotary was well represented at the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast this morning
Names listed not in any particular order:
Anthony Russo, Peggy Kelley, Dean Billman, Howard Raff, Larry Weiss, Jim Osterling, Hillary Schenk, Mary Lou Byrne, Gary Kearney, Tammy Silver, Geoff Baum, Paul Roach, Wendy Anderson, George Falardeau, Gene Buchanan, Marilyn Buchanan, Mic Hansen, Frank Fish, Marisol Perez, Phil & Dena Hawkey, Chris Miller, Danny Petersen

The Scoot Zone

By Staff Reporter Nick Duretta

Photographers: PP Ken Joe & Larry Weiss

President-Elect Tammy Silver rang the bell at 12:30. In recognition of this week's theme —the changing trends of how people purchase clothes and fashions— **Past President Mary Lou Byrne** led everyone in a rendition of "There's No Business Like Clothes Business," a variation on the famous Irving Berlin song. **Chris Layne** gave the inspiration, reading an excerpt of English romantic poet William Wordsworth's sonnet, "The World is too Much With Us." The poem laments how the demands of the material world so often prevent us from connecting with, and finding tranquility in, nature.

Inductions

PP Howard Raff introduced Dimitri "Dee" Jones, a new active member. Dee worked in the hospitality industry for many years before assuming his current position as director of community relations for Morningstar, a senior retirement community in Pasadena.

PP Mary Lou Byrne introduced Justin Glasson, a new active corporate member. Justin has a history of fundraising and is currently chief development officer at the Pasadena Playhouse.

Announcements

Mary Lou Byrne made a Polio Pig donation and gave thanks to the Rotarians who volunteered their time for shifts at the Pasadena Showcase Design House, which continues through May 17th.

Mike Bernard made a Polio Pig donation to extend thanks to the Teachers of Excellence welcome committee at last week's meeting.

Devon Ogden made a Polio Pig donation to remind everyone of a Backyard Barbecue, to be held on May 28, in support of the Walter Hoving Home, a substance abuse treatment center for women**.**

PHOTO; Devon stuffing the pig for her BBQ!

Eric Olson made a Polio Pig donation to urge everyone to check with the Los Angeles County Bar Association for the Bar's assessment of judicial candidates. Eric,

congratulations on your fiftieth anniversary with the California Bar!
Catherine Hany announced that the deadline for nominations for Paul Harris Fellow Community Service Award awards is May 8.
PP Ken Joe made a Polio Pig donation on behalf of the Foulkes family to thank everyone for their support and participation in the recognition of John Foulkes' Celebration of Life, recognizing his many years of service to the organization. Eight past Rotary Pasadena presidents also were in attendance.
Armida Baylon made a Polio Pig Donation to announce that after 43 years as Executive Director of Hear Center, **Ellen Simon** is retiring with a farewell reception on Thursday, May 21st from 3pm-6pm - all Rotarians are invited. Please RSVP by May 14th or request a flyer from Armida at ***armidabaylon@gmail.com***

PE Tammy Silver asked the group for examples of which animal might serve as Rotary Pasadena's mascot (not that one will actually be chosen). With the help of **President Elect Elect and Sergeant at Arms Robert Lyons**, suggestions gathered included an octopus (because of its many arms handling many functions), an otter (because it is fun-loving and industrious), and bees (because they're busy and work well together).

Guest Speaker
Sonya Sharififard introduced the week's speaker, **Nicole Craig**. She is an instructor at ASU FIDM (Fashion Institute) and serves as the Los Angeles Campus Merchandising Area Coordinator. She has been educating future fashion professionals since 2011.

Nicole spoke on "Shaping the Future of Fashion: Innovation, Technology and the Consumer," focusing on the continued role of brick-and-mortar stores (specifically, shopping malls) in the sales of clothes and other fashions to consumers

Contrary to what many people believe, Nicole says, the current reduction in the popularity of shopping malls was not due entirely to the development Internet and COVID. The marketplace had been oversaturated for many years; the United States had more retail space per person than any other developed country.

Many malls, Nicole explained, have survived because they offer what the Internet cannot—high-level customer service, and an integrative shopping experience. While lower-level malls have suffered, Nicole pointed out that three of the top seven malls in the country are in Southern California (The Grove, The Americana, and South Coast Plaza), and are thriving.

In Pasadena, the Paseo shopping mall has been plagued with low usage for many years. Nicole is convinced it can be revitalized, with a focus on the community, consumer appetites and a distinctive shopping experience. In particular, she says, younger consumers such as Generation Z are craving a return to fashions and shopping experiences of the past.

After presenting the speaker with pairs of Rotary socks, **Tammy** adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

L2R: PP Mel Cohen, Susanne Cohen, PE Tammy Silver, Carmen Choy Surdam, Nicole Craig, Becky Detrick, Dr. Sonya Sharifiard, Patrick Dinan

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

BILL OPEL - May 9th

JASIRI JENKINS-GLENN - May 11th

GEORGE FALARDEAU - May 12th

HAPPY ROTAVERSARY

Colleen Carey	5/13/09	17 Years
Debbie Loveland	5/11/05	21 Years
Paul.Martin	5/13/15	11 Years
Lynne Sullivan	5/10/23	3 Years

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

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

May 27th - Robert Hartstein & Mike Bollenbacher - University Club - Back from the Ashes

June 3rd - Paul Harris Fellow Community Award

June 10th - Neil Siegel - Viterbi School of Engineering at USÇ - AI and Medical Advances

June 17th - Teacher, Writer, Storyteller (The Moth) - Your Story Matters

June 24, 2026 - President Hillary's Last Meeting

SPOKES is the weekly newsletter published by the Rotary Club of Pasadena

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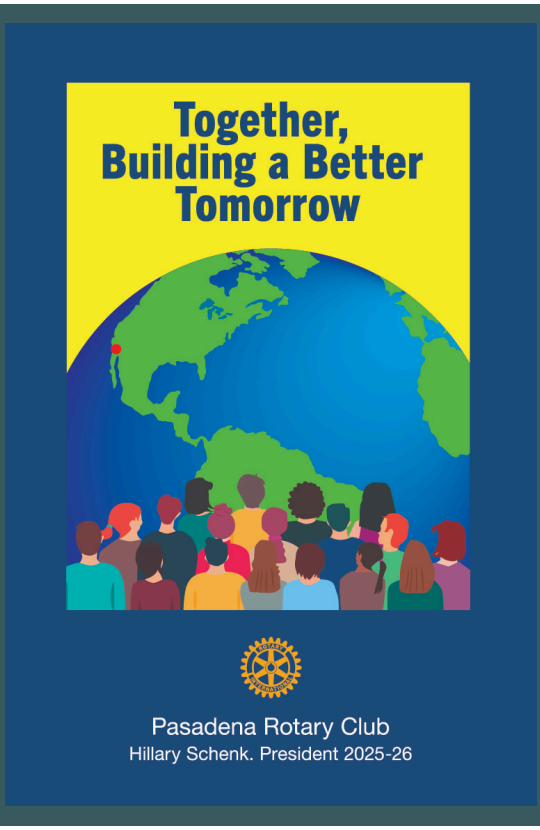

ROTARY CLUB OF PASADENA 2025-2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETS the 3rd Thursday of every month at 5pm - University Club of Pasadena

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, Nevino Rocco, Alan Schier, Dede Venkat
Non-Voting Member: Amanda Pumilia, Chair, The Impact Club

Rotary Club of Pasadena

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