



**'SPARKS' OFF THE ROTARY WHEEL**  
*An Award-Winning Newsletter*



**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



**THIS WEEK: MELANIE SYMONDS**

**Altadena Town and Country Club, Thursday at noon**

Speaker Chair for October: Maria Perez-Arton



Melanie Symonds lives in Altadena with her husband, Mike Gurnis, her three goldfish, two chickens and one cat. Many, many moons ago she earned her BFA in Costume Design from Calarts in Valencia, California, and a Diploma of Higher Education in Theatre Wardrobe from the Wimbledon School of Art in London, England.

For fifteen eventful years she slogged away at every known avenue of costume work including costume shop management, costume design, assistant design, pattern making, sewing, fabric dyeing, millinery, costume crafts, back stage dressing, alterations and laundry. Her career included stints at such esteemed venues as The Royal Opera House, Western Costume Company, NBC Television, Ice Capades, The Kern and Grove Shakespeare Festivals, El Camino College, CSU Long Beach, Occidental and Pomona Colleges, and lastly, Universal Studios Theme Park, Hollywood.

Melanie gratefully left the Entertainment Industry after supervising the costume department at Universal's theme park, quite possibly with a hole in her soul, but she did not give up her costume shears entirely. Instead she found herself in the longterm employ of her daughter, laboring annually over Halloween costumes, then Manga

**OCTOBER 31, 2024**

**OCTOBER IS: Economic & Community Development Month**

**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

and Anime cosplays, and now Video game LARP personas. This longterm enterprise started with Pikachu in kindergarten and continues to this day with post apocalyptic characters who inhabit the world of Wasteland Weekends. May God help us all.

For Melanie's presentation for the Rotary Club on Halloween Day, she will attempt to fashion an entertaining and seasonally festive talk weaving together some of her personal experiences and occasional brushes with the famous, while working behind the costume curtain in the roles of stitcher, fabric dyer, dresser and pattern maker.



<https://www.ecsforseniors.org/montecedro/>



James Sarni holds the Chartered Financial Analyst and Chartered Investment Counselor designations. He earned an MBA with an emphasis in finance and a BS from the University of Southern California.

## LAST WEEK: JAMES P. SARNI MANAGING DIRECTOR, PAYDEN & RYGEL

Speaker Chair: Maria Perez-Arton      Review: Tom Polenzani



Jim Sarni has been in the investment business for the last 40 years. He is currently the Managing Director of Payden and Rygel.

James set the stage with the question, “Where are we in the economy today?”. The Fed rate means nothing. Our world is incredibly resilient. The US job market is strong. Inflation is coming down and by early 2025, it should be at 2.0 %. We have experienced an incredible increase in productivity – the highest in decades.

James proposed that ‘working’ is what leads to spending, ‘saving’ doesn’t. For now, consumers are putting more expenses on credit cards and rich people have more money than they know what to do with. On the negative side, the US \$30 trillion in national debt could become a major problem. A time will come when the interest incurred on this debt will exceed the cost of Social Security and Medicare.

Taking the long view regarding the economy, the results of US administrations under Republicans and Democrats yielded virtually the same. We are more global than ever so money flows around the world more easily than in any other period in history. Bonds are back and we may never have another recession..

The number one thing to watch when considering a stock investment is corporate earnings. Don’t give up on the US! Our markets are still outperforming. And the old adage is as true as ever: never try to time the market!

<https://www.payden.com/>

## Rotary Monthly Themes

- July - Maternal & Child Health Month
- August - Membership & New Club Development Month
- September - Basic Education & Literacy Month
- October - Economic & Community Development Month
- November - Rotary Foundation Month
- December - Disease Prevention & Treatment Month
- January - Vocational Service Month
- February - Peace and Conflict Prevention Month
- March - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene Month
- April - Environmental Month
- May - Youth Service Month
- June - Fellowship month



## VOTE! Don't Let Halloween or Advertisements Scare You Away!

President Maricela

Each November, our club starts the process of preparing a slate of candidates for our Board of Directors. The Nominating Committee consists of the President-Elect and the last four club past presidents. In January, the slate of candidates is usually presented at the first club meeting of the New Year. Those attending vote for our next set of leaders. The term starts July 1, 2025 and is a two-year term. In Spanish, we say "Su voto es su voz". Translation: "Your vote is your voice".

Tuesday, November 5th is the last day to vote. I encourage all of you who have not yet voted to please do so. It is amazing that in the last 11 Presidential Election Years (since 1980), the average of eligible voters that actually went to the poles hovered around 56%. In 2020, the country actually saw 65.9% of the eligible voters cast a vote. That still meant that more than 80 million registered adults did NOT vote.

I don't have much time for television but over the last few weeks, most of the commercials have been advertising Halloween (8-10%), upcoming elections (65%), food (10%) and others. When parents seem concerned by too many political ads, I respond with, "You know that it is up to you to decipher or filter the ad and then make a logical choice". If I had more time with them, I would share the 4-Way Test of the things we think, say or do. That might help.

Back to Halloween, for those of you who will help kids, grandchildren or other young individuals go Trick or Treating in the neighborhood, please don't forget that there are organized events also. Two important to our club include the Driveway Concert and Goodie Giveaway in the driveway of Irina's home (from Melodia Mariposa). The address is 1165 E. Mariposa St. The event is from 4-6pm. From there, please consider stopping at Farnsworth Park where our club helps provide some of the giveaways and



## Rotary International Convention 2025

The 2025 ROTARY International Convention will be held in Calgary from June 21 to June 25, 2025. The event is organized by Rotary International and is expected to draw attendees from more than 100 countries.

For more info and to register:  
<https://convention.rotary.org/en-us/>



## Altadena Rotary Social

Be sure to add November 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. to your calendar! This is the date for our Club's first evening social which is all about mingling and sharing.

This event will be at Plate 38, 2361 Colorado Blvd (the northeast corner of Colorado Blvd. and Sierra Madre). Parking is available on both Colorado and Sierra Madre Blvd. and in the lot on the east side of Plate 38. We will have a section of the restaurant reserved, so just mention you are with the Rotary Club on entry.

works with the Sheriff's office for Trunk or Treat. There is also a not-so-scary Haunted House. (Isabel and Andrew O'Brien pictured).



On Wednesday, October 23rd, our club was well represented at the Pasadena Village Annual Celebration where the club was recognized for our service to their organization. 12 club members and two spouses were in attendance (pictured above). Mark gave a nice short speech on behalf of the club.

November is Rotary Foundation Month. Our club is in the process of sending just over \$3,400 to the Foundation in honor of the End Polio Now Campaign. Most of the funds came from the Summer Concert Series but around \$500 was collected last Thursday on "World Polio Day". A big thank you to Mike Zoeller for sharing his experience as a polio survivor and to Sue who shared briefly about her experience as a child with polio.

You can order from the full or Happy Hour menus. Everyone who attends will order directly with the waiter and pay their own bill. All bills will include an 18% service fee because of the individual billing.

The Happy Hour menu (which is in effect until 6 pm) includes small plates ranging from \$4 to \$13. The same menu also includes wines from \$10 to \$12 and draft beer for \$6.

This social get-together will start as a quarterly event. We will try out a couple more restaurants and then decide whether to continue "rotating" or stick with one location.

These socials are in addition to our regular weekly meetings at the Altadena Country Club, not in place of a meeting.

If you have any questions or want to serve on the social committee, contact **Tom Polenzani** ([polenzani@gmail.com](mailto:polenzani@gmail.com), 626-675-4729)

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## **LAST WEEK AT THE CLUB!**



### **Save The Date: December 17th**

On Tuesday, December 17th from 5-7pm., our Rotary Club will join the Altadena Town Council and Altadena Library Foundation for a special 'Holiday Invitational Reception' hosted by the Rose Bowl Operating Company. Club members and one guest will be able to attend. The

reception includes appetizers, drinks and tours of the Rose Bowl grounds and locker rooms. More information will be available via email in late November.



On World Polio Day (October 24), Mike Zoeller, a polio survivor shared his experience. Sue Applegate also experienced polio as a child.