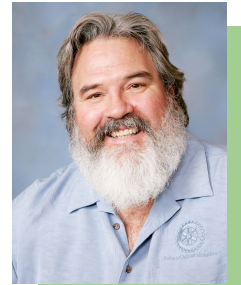


## THE Construction CREW

by Theo Clarke  
for President David Smith




### This Week

#### Mid-Year Club Assembly Plans for the Next Six Months Program Host: Regina Bette

This week the Altadena Rotary Club will be holding it's mid-term Club Assembly. This Club Assembly is intended to take a retrospective look at club accomplishments to date and planned activities to come.

Each current Club Director, officer and some chairholders will give a progress report and planned events to come.

This year our meeting will be at CHAP. Those present will be hearing about new ideas and programs


Plan to come, ask questions and support your Altadena Rotary Club by being an active participant. 

### It's a New Day

I rejoice at the opportunity to help my Rotary brother Dave and at the same time regale you with my thoughts. It is a new year, so today we will speak about renewal. We have much fun in the Club teasing me about my violin. I enjoy the attention. And I certainly appreciate it that Dave has suffered me to play now and then. But let me tell you a story ... a story about renewal that involves my violin.

I started lessons with my first real violin teacher, Mr. George Devron, in 1976, and have been taking lessons once a week ever since. The lessons with Mr. Devron went way beyond the violin itself. He had a tremendous metaphysical consciousness, and attended Christian Science services regularly. I had started in the Church of Religious Science in 1977, and, after awhile, Mr. Devron and I talked metaphysics to each other. Not forced, just natural. And then, in time, when I would drive up to his home in Brentwood on Saturday mornings for my lesson, he would often be in the front yard watering the lawn, or just enjoying the day. I would get

out of my car, get my violin out of the back seat, and, as I walked up the driveway, Mr. Devron and I would say together, "This is the day the Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad in it." We would laugh together, knowing in our hearts that we spoke the truth, and then we would proceed to have a great lesson. Lessons with Mr. Devron were like going to church on Saturdays. I was renewed. Let me close with words from Paul the Apostle in Romans 12:2:

*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.* 

### Greeters

January 07

Art Ferris

January 14

Fred Figueroa

January 21

Jacque Foreman



# Program Review

## Fire on the Mountain!

It's one thing to read about the huge fires that regularly devastate southern California, and it's mesmerizing to watch the battles against these fires on



television, but it's another thing entirely to hear about a battle against these fires from someone you know very well, and whose house you've been to many times.

This was the case with our speaker last week, Theo Clarke, who has hosted many meetings and parties for our club at his

house on the mountain that he calls Eden II. Last August, a small fire started in La Canada. It didn't get much play on the news at first because there was a bigger fire on the coast at Malibu. Very quickly, however, this fire in the San Gabriel Mountains eclipsed that fire in size and became known as the Station Fire. As this fire roared down the mountain, Clarke's house was directly in its path. As Clarke said as he showed pictures of the fire, "Thank goodness for La Vina." The fact that the fire was threatening the homes in both La Vina and The Meadows, caused

the firefighters to use his property as the place to make a stand against this ferocious blaze.



Clarke showed a series of pictures as the fire was getting closer and closer, until he was forced to evacuate. When the firefighters asked him if he had ammunition stored in the house, and he said he did, they asked him to go back and get it so it wouldn't detonate if the house caught fire. As Theo said, "This was *not* a good sign."

The firefighters gathered at Clarke's house for the battle. Six fire trucks set up a staging area on the mesa in front of his house. Twelve firefighters began to hand dig a fire break trench behind the house. And, the final item that really saved

*Please turn to Program, p. 3*



8-29-09, Sat, 10 am, Hills Ablaze from the bottom of the road

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### Rotary Club of Altadena - #7183

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Brian Hayes • Ed Jasnow  
Tom McCurry • Mike Zoeller

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Craig Cox ..... Foundation.  
Tom McCurry ..... Public Affairs  
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Ed Jasnow ..... Community.  
Hal Yorke ..... International  
Mike Noll ..... Youth Contests/Awards  
Tony Hill ..... Vocational/Youth Projects  
John Guerrini ..... Membership  
Editor, Design & Typesetting ..... Foreman Graphics  
Photography ..... Jacque Foreman

## January Programs

### Program Chair, Regina Bette

Jan 07 - Club Assembly - Special Location:  
CHAP - 1855 N. Fair Oaks Ave., Pasadena  
Jan 14 - Brian Biery-Flintridge Foundation-  
Efforts in North East Pasadena  
Jan 21 - Leadership Pasadena Team. Guest  
host: C. Ray Carlson  
Jan 28 - Chanel Boutakidis-Pasadena Mental  
Health Center- Meeting Community Needs

## February Programs

### Program Chair, John Frykenberg

Feb 06 - To be Announced  
Feb 13 - To be Announced  
Feb 20 - To be Announced  
Feb 21 - To be Announced

**Congratulations**




**Birthdays**

01/03 - Betty Ferris  
01/09 - Gloria Hayes  
01/14 - Bill Reeder  
01/27 - Ann Rider (Hill)  
01/27 - Barbara Yorke




**Anniversaries**

01/03 - Jim & Karen Gorton  
01/22 - John & Joan Frykenberg

# Chairmen's Quality Schools in Hard Times

by Ed Jasnow Chair, Community Service



Because of my activities in the school district, I'm on a list that receives news flashes from the PUSD. I was very dismayed to receive a news flash today that said that the District was struggling to find a way to cut \$21 million from the budget. **\$21 million!!** How could they possibly cut that much money out of the budget and still continue the wonderfully upward trend of the quality of the education they've been providing? The attachment to the news flash, which detailed some of

the budget cuts being considered, was probably one of the most depressing documents I've ever read. It showed 50 percent reductions in athletics; the closing of three small elementary schools, one small middle school, and one small high school; reductions in faculty, which will raise class sizes; reductions in school counselors; 5-day furloughs for everyone; salary reductions of 1 percent; and other reductions that will make it virtually impossible to provide a quality education to the community's most valuable resource — its children.

I have always preached the fact that I consider Community Service to be

Rotary's most important area of service because it hits closest to home. Within that area of service, I have always felt that the school system was important because it was responsible for the future of our community. That's why we have always had a mini-grant program to provide teachers with the resources to enhance the classroom experience of their students. As helpful as they are, however, they are like a Band-Aid on a hemorrhage.

The District is looking for ways to raise revenue to offset some of the reductions. One avenue being considered is a parcel tax, which will require a two-thirds vote of the citizens. Another way is to look at the lease potential of PUSD property. And, a third is to charge for rides on the school bus — just what poor people need.

What can we do to help? As Community Service Chair, I will listen to any suggestions by anybody. If we can't do it with money, then we have to do it with time. How and where can we volunteer?

I'm thinking very hard. I just know that our community is in jeopardy, and we must help.

## Program

Continued from p.2



Fire Engine and Firefighters Gathering, Sat. 11 am

the house was a fire hydrant that received water from his 12,000-gallon reservoir, that was serviced by the Lincoln Avenue Water Company.

Clarke showed pictures of all the



Cactus After the Fire

action. He watched the battle through binoculars from Linda Vista, and showed aerial photos of the damage that had occurred as a result of the fire. One entire wall of the El Prieto Canyon was completely charred. The heat charred the wood on top of his reservoir, as well as one side of a tree near his driveway.

But, nature recovers rapidly. Clarke euthanized the charred tree and turned it into fire-

wood, and he showed pictures of plant life coming back in the middle of the ashes. The cycle of life and death



Rebirth

continues.

It was harrowing to see how close Clarke's house came to being burned to the ground. It really brought the Station Fire very close to home. Thank goodness for those heroic firefighters.

Ed Jasnow

## John & Nick visit Noir Food & Wine

So, the other night we found ourselves alone at home, not particularly in the mood to cook dinner. But it was 9p, and we figured the kitchen at most places would be closed or soon closing.

For the last few weeks, we'd been wanting to try *Noir Food & Wine*, the newest wine bar in Pasadena. We went to Noir's website and found a burger on the menu: *tarragon, caramelized onions, remoulade sauce and melted manchego*. **Sold!** So we called, and the head chef told us that the kitchen was closing for dinner but that if we came down *right now*, he'd keep it open for us.

Fast forward 10 minutes, and we were ordering away.

First up was the heirloom beet salad, with chives, roasted garlic vinaigrette and parmesan mousse.



This was an awesome salad full of bright and vibrant flavors. The garlic was intense, but not overpowering. The beets were sliced thin, almost match-stick style. It was crunchy, sweet, salty and earthy all at once.

The server brought out a glass of 2007 *Rancho Arroyo Grande Zinfandel* (San Luis Obispo). Think smoke, vanilla and pepper, which, of course, are classic pairs to the salad. The tannins were quite soft — so much so that they almost became crowded out by the berries in the finish.

Next up was the reason we came — the *Farwell Burger*.



Tarragon, caramelized onions, remoulade sauce and melted manchego. Oh yeah! All of it was on ciabatta bread. It disappeared in about 60 seconds. (Note — apparently, *Farwell* is a nod to the last name of one of the owners of the bar.) Both of us thought that, though a bit on the small side, these burgers were the highlight of the evening.

With the burgers, the server brought out a glass of the 2006 *Arshura (Marche) Montepulciano*. It's really big on the nose and quite spicy. It was clearly aged in new oak. And it has lots of fruit. A good solid wine. It was the perfect match with the meaty, sweet, smoky, chewy burger.

Here's the fries and various sauces that were served with them.

They were ok. ... They could have



used a bit of salt.

Still hungry, we ordered a small salad of burrata and shaved Bosc pears.



This was an amazing salad that still haunts us both. The pears were shaved nearly wafer thin and tossed with just a tiny bit of walnut vinaigrette and fresh parsley, then carefully placed on top of one of the most luscious mounds of fresh burrata that we've ever had. Oh yes, it was that good.



A good wine bar must offer charcuterie and cheeses. Noir has both. We ordered a small cheese plate.

John insisted that the plate include his favorite stinky cheese, Epoisse.

Nick stuck with sorbet.



*Please turn to Wine, p. 5*



# MONEY by Linda Wilkes MATTERS

## Last Week in the News

Existing home sales rose 7.4 percent in November to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 6.54 million units from 6.09 million units in October. On a year-over-year basis, sales of existing homes increased 44 percent, the largest gain on record. The inventory of unsold homes on the market fell 1.3 percent to 3.52 million, a 6.5-month supply at the current sales pace, and the lowest level since December 2006.

The Commerce Department announced that gross domestic product — the total output of goods and services produced in the US — increased at an annual rate of 2.2 percent in the third quarter of 2009. This was the final revision of the third-quarter report and was lower than the previous estimate of 2.8 percent.

The Commerce Department reported that consumer spending rose 0.5 percent in November, slightly less than economists had anticipated. Personal income increased 0.4 percent, the fastest pace in six months.

The Reuters/University of Michigan consumer sentiment index for December's final reading rose to 72.5 from November's final reading of 67.4. Economists had forecast a December reading of 73.8.

The Commerce Department reported new home sales fell 11 percent in November to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 355,000 from a downwardly revised rate of 400,000 in October. Economists had expected a pace of 440,000.

Orders for durable goods — items expected to last three or more years — rose 0.2 percent in November after a 0.6 percent decline in October. Excluding volatile transportation-related goods, orders posted a sizeable monthly gain of 2 percent.

Initial claims for unemployment benefits fell by 28,000 to 452,000 in the week ending December 19. Continuing claims for the week ending December 12 fell by

127,000 to 5.08 million.

Upcoming reports on the housing price index and consumer confidence on December 29.

## Wine

*Continued from p. 4*

But we both finished up with Noir's version of a chocolate terrine.

The creme anglaise disappeared almost as fast as the terrine.

We were the last to leave the place and vowed that — without a doubt, we'd be back soon.

Noir is at 40 Mentor Avenue, Pasadena, California. 626-795-7199

Until next time ...



**Make the Pig fly**

THE UNITED WAY  
POLIOPLUS  
Rotary International  
END POLIO NOW

**Don Applegate's**  
**HILARIOUS**  
**HISTORY**

Late in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, German philosopher and Sage of the Age Friedrich Nietzsche loudly and proudly expressed his feelings about the past when he penned these words: "The final lesson of history: Let's never go back there again!" Ah...poor, unhappy Freddie! It seems that he just completely missed the point and never gazed upon history's HUMOROUS HALF! And, if he ever HAD seen it, he either didn't recognize it, or sadly, chose to give it neither credence nor lip service. No, instead, his uncharitable prose sternly counseled us that we must distance ourselves from history and avoid it as we would a virulent case of toenail fungus. Hard to know what dark, tormented thoughts occupying his Teutonic mind impelled him to say such things.

He was hardly alone, though. Other history haters included this renowned American author who equated the past with London's notorious Newgate Prison when he opined: "History is but a kind of Newgate calendar, a register of the crimes and miseries that man has inflicted on his fellow man." That warm, uplifting utterance courtesy of Washington Irving. And, from some anonymous sophist comes another tart little pearl: "With history being made all the time, every day now seems to be the First Anniversary of something awful."

Well...that's just about enough of that, and I REALLY MUST PROTEST! While the words of the aforementioned scribes were severe enough in their condemnation, there surely are others who have an even more intensely sour view of the past. They depict it as being a frightful phantasma-

- goria of
- HIDEOUS HUMANS...DESPICABLE DEEDS... and
  - ODISIOUS OCCURRENCES.
- And my response?**  
**Balderdash!**  
**Bullfeathers! Plus:**

No way, Jose! Despite all of that se- creted bile and pessimism, their sardonic portrayal of the past is way beyond being merely one-sided; it is also BADLY INAC- CURATE.

Here is another quotation which — in only three words — sums up MY aver- sion to their rampant negativity. And that mini-maxim simply states: NATURE AB- HORS IMBALANCE. Ah, but what does this mean? What it means is that nature firmly disallows such a lopsided status as they envision to exist — and CERTAINLY not for as long as history has been around!

No... nature DEMANDS that a bal- ance be reached and that this equilibrium be maintained. In other words, wherever something WRONG is happening, else- where something RIGHT must be taking place. Every EVIL act will be counterbal- anced by a BENEVO- LENT one, etc.; and, that this has been going on since time be- gan. Although...those countless killjoy crit- ics somehow manage to nimbly sidestep and totally ignore an entire segment of history, as though it couldn't, and never did, happen. Geez, where's the love, guys?

And yet, ALL of us with even limited knowledge of the past will quickly cor- roborate this sorrowful fact: History DOES INDEED have its ugly, cruel and shameful side. But... we also hasten to point out the eternal intervention of that natural equi-

librium described earlier. This ongoing, adroitly performed balancing act gives EQUAL TIME to history's OTHER side—a past that is FULL of laughter and light- ness, chuckles and cheer; or, what I zest- fully refer to as *HILARIOUS HISTORY*.

Of course, that army of hidebound naysayers will continue to drone their same litany of loathing: Because history is repugnant and vile, *ad nauseam*, it is best expunged from memory and left deeply buried in our distant yesterdays. To that, I must again respond:

**Phooey! Flapdoodle!**  
**And a heaping pile of camel chips!**

I have often entered history's ar- chives to research whatever subject is to become my next narrative presentation. And, take these frequent junkets into the past not only to learn about more of the marvelous things stored there, but ESPE- CIALY to draw from the fathomless well of HUMOR that history unflinchingly pro- vides. Now, since I've had such a good time doing this through the years, I thought maybe you'd like to tag along and get in on the fun, too. And, this personal invitation also serves to let you know about this new column, *HILARIOUS HIS- TORY*, that will appear occasionally in *Sparks*.

So then, care to join me? I sure hope so! Also, our first sojourn into *The Great Before* is scheduled to get under way real soon—Herr Nietzsche & Co. notwithstand- ing. And, speaking of that worthy who was quoted at the beginning of this missive, I would now like to close it out with a quo- tation from another, though not so highly celebrated, philosopher ... and that would be me: "That which is historical can also be hysterical." Okay, so I'm not a poet, either. See you in the past, in the very near future.

**Hunh? What'd he say?**  
 ●●●●●

*Editor's Note: Welcome, Don, to our growing list of columnists. The addition of our regular/irregular columns is one of the things that makes Sparks unique in our Rotary district -- at least.--if*