



Rotary Club of Altadena

# Sparks

OFF THE ROTARY WHEEL  
AN AWARD-WINNING NEWSLETTER



August 22, 2019

## This Week's Program

### Michael Thatcher, Craft Talk Program Host Tom McCurry

Michael James Thatcher was born in Phoenix to musicians James and Coleen Thatcher. He is an actor, singer, athlete and magazine publisher.

Thatcher is currently the co-publisher of *Altadena Neighbors* Magazine. In addition to publishing, he is a Shakespearean and musical theater actor who has appeared all over Southern California. He has been married to his wife Olivia for nine years. They have three children, ages 4, 6 and 8.

He was a cross country All-American for Ricks College and led his team to an NJCAA National Championship in 1999.

Thatcher spent six years chasing the elusive 4-minute mile barrier, coming within 7 seconds of the mark. He loves family and community and not talking about politics.

## Family Connections

Last Thursday, our speaker mentioned that his wife, Christina (Tina) Mariscal (who also attended the luncheon), is a fifth-generation merchant on Olvera Street in Los Angeles. Just prior to that, Mike Noll stood up during the *Happy Bucks* part of

the meeting to say that Christina works at High Point Academy and he appreciated her assistance during his two years as Chair of the Board of Directors at that campus.

And, prior to that, I told the group that Tina is the daughter of my oldest brother Michael, who currently owns the (90-years in operation) Family Store.

So, the Mariscal Family might have a long history on Olvera Street, but in Rotary, I have only 19 years and my second oldest brother (Marty in Santa Maria) spent about 5 years in Rotary a few years back.

Rotary International is encouraging clubs to consider expanding membership by creating different categories such as Corporate/Agency Memberships or Family



## On the Mark

By Mark Mariscal, President

Membership. Our Board of Directors will be talking about the topic at our next meeting in September. More info to come.



Mariscal family (l to r) Mark, younger sister Kathy, and older brothers Marty, and Michael (Tina's father)

Rotary is 114 years old. For the last 20 plus years, the membership level as stayed steady at 1.2 million members. I am not sure of the exact numbers, but the turnover has been such

that almost 800,000 new members have joined over the last 25 years, with the same number ending their membership.

There are many reasons why a member would drop out of Rotary. One of those is death. This week we lost a long-time member, Gary Clark. There will be more information about his life and plans for a service as they become available.

## Greeter of the Week

August 22  
Dennis Mebringer

## A Life of Designing Toys for Children



**M**ost of the time at our luncheons at Altadena Rotary, there are presenta-

tions about a local nonprofit organization and the work it is doing in the greater Pas-

adena area. Or there will be a talk about a new member's career or profession in what is called a *Craft Talk*. This last Thursday, we had a Craft Talk from someone who is not a member of Altadena Rotary but who told us about his interesting career as a designer of children's toys.

Edgar Pasten is a local resident who has a passion for children's toys. He is the director of innovation for a company located in North Hills California called Imperial Toy. Imperial Toy is a manufacturer of toys which are distributed all over the world. Imperial is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019. Imperial distributes its toys in over 75 countries and distributes through such major companies as Walgreens, Walmart and Target. It has major affiliates in Los Angeles, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom and Modena Italy.

Many of Imperial's toys have a food theme and many have bubbles as part of their theme. Some of their current products include: Scentables which is a fruit scented make-up for young girls; Blitz Bubbles which is a bubbly treat which floats higher and



lasts longer than typical bubble products; the Blitz Light-up Bubble Blaster, which is a mobile bubble blaster with LED lights. The Blaster shoots endless streams of bubbles. The Power Popper Inflatable Sword which is a thrilling pop-up toy. Another popular toy is the Funky Farm which is a series of colorful, squeezable, rubber farm animals.

Pastern is one of the principal designers of new toys for Imperial. He has had a strong

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### Rotary Club of Altadena - #7183

Chartered: February 14, 1949

P.O. Box 414, Altadena, CA 91003

www.altadenarotary.com

Meets: Thursday, 12:10p

Altadena Town & Country Club

2290 Country Club Drive • Altadena, CA

626-794-7163

Rotary Int. Pres.....Mark Daniel Maloney

Dist 5300 Gov.....Luanne Arredondo

#### Officers

Mark Mariscal, Pres.....Cell: 323-816-6713

Pres. Elec., David Smith ..... Cell: 626-826-2193

Sarah O'Brien, V. Pres. .... Cell: 310-902-6547

Jim Gorton, Sec.....Bus. 323-816-6713

Mike Noll, Treas. ....Bus. 626-683-0515

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Editor, Design & Typesetting..... Foreman Graphics

Photography.....Jacque Foreman

### August

#### Membership & Club Development

#### Program Chair, Tom McCurry

August 01 - Robert Harrison, Green Street Restaurant

August 08 - Dr. Glenn Biasi, Earthquakes & Earthquake Early Warning in CA

August 15 - To be Announced

August 22 - Craft Talk - Michael Thatcher

August 29 - John Teal, Waste Management,

### Congratulations



#### Birthdays



02 - Phyllis Merrill

10 - Don Applegate

30 - Paula Mariscal

31 - Bruce Conroy (J. Foreman)



#### Anniversaries



23 - Garry & Dotty Clark

## Craft Talks They are Important



This Thursday is the first of four new-member Craft talks that are being scheduled over the next 8 weeks. Before Summer, our club installed Michael Thatcher and Richard Kurtz. And, in July, we welcomed Kelly Bennett and Sonia Kwon.

Our club encourages new members to schedule their *Craft Talks* within the first 3 to 4 months of becoming a member so that the seasoned members have a better

understanding of why the person joined and what area(s) of the club s/he might want to focus on.

If you haven't had an opportunity to speak with our new members either at a meeting or outside of our meetings and learn about their professional life, please do so.

You might have forgotten or just not been aware that Rotary started as a networking organization that, for the first 90 years or so, really tried to encourage clubs to select members based on the *Member Classifica-*

*tion List* that Rotary still maintains. This was to ensure that a club would not have too many members from the same profession.

But, as the years passed and the emphasis of membership changed from being a networking organization to an organization that works to transform the world through good deeds, many classifications have been added, while some have been dropped.

A healthy club (like ours) has a mix of professionals (along with some retirees) from diverse work experience and backgrounds. ○

## Program

*Continued from p.2*

interest in toys and their design since he was a small child. He is a graduate of Otis College, where he learned much of his design skills. He travels frequently to China to work with the design teams and manufacturing staff for Imperial. He also spends much of this time interacting with the distributors of Imperial's products. A major event in which Imperial participates in the San



**Speaker with son Gabriel, also a toy enthusiast**

Diego ComicCon, which he calls the *Super Bowl* of comic conventions.

Pastern's passion for toys and their design is impressive. We enjoyed the opportunity to learn about a local company with a world-wide impact.

One of their favorite toys is a collection of what they call *Disney D-Lectables*. These are Disney characters reimagined.



Each D-lectable character treat separates into four (4) pieces which *cross match* to other D-lectable characters, allowing children to be very creative as they mix and match the pieces of each character, with the pieces of other characters, allowing the building of hundreds of unique configurations. **Boyd Hudson** ○

## Dinner with the Manson Family Well, ... Sort of

With its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Manson family murders are once again in the news. I have my own story.

Our college's 20<sup>th</sup> class reunion ended its first day at a local restaurant. Classmates and spouses randomly seated themselves at long tables in a dark-paneled dining room. Ruth and I found ourselves across from Steve Kay and his wife. Ours was a small class so everyone, to a greater or lesser degree, knew everyone else. Steve and I were friendly but not close; he had been something of a track star, a world in which I did not participate. He had the same thin build and friendly, intense demeanor I remembered from years before.

I also knew that Steve had graduated from Boalt Law School in Berkeley and had become a deputy district attorney with the Los Angeles District Attorney's office. He had, a mutual friend told me, been a principal prosecutor in the Manson murder trials. Since the subject seemed unavoidable, I began by admitting that Ruth had read Vincent Bugliosi's *Helter Skelter*, but that I had not. Steve said that it was a very accurate account of what had happened. Also set forth in the book, Steve had successfully prosecuted several of the young women who had followed Manson into terrible acts of evil.

I asked Steve to explain the meaning of *Helter Skelter* and why it had – gruesomely – been written (and misspelled) in blood on one of the victim's walls. Steve surprised me by saying that he thought that this part of the case had been poorly reported by newspapers, possibly because the reporters did not understand its meaning, or if they did, thought it incendiary and therefore minimized reference to it, or its importance. In fact, Steve said, Manson's family of followers discussed *Helter Skelter* constantly, came to believe Manson's idea, and it was unquestionably on their minds as they committed their ghastly crimes.

The idea of *Helter Skelter*, Steve said,

was this: It was evident that black people excelled in physical competitions of all kinds. American football, basketball, baseball, and our Olympic teams were dominated by black people, demonstrating their unquestionable physical superiority. Yet they only represented about 10 percent of the population. But they did not have a similar share of political or economic power. This (Manson concluded) must mean that, while physically superior, they were not as smart as white people.

Steve went on: Manson repeated endlessly to his family – isolated at Spahn movie ranch in the Los Angeles hills – that blacks were seething with anger over this economic and power disparity with whites ... a resentment waiting to explode. Manson and his family could thus start a race war by committing crimes so vile that the police would conclude that no white person could have done them. Therefore, they must have been done by black people. Clues written in the blood of the victims, like "Helter Skelter," a Beatles song implying revolution, and "Death to Pigs," a term used by Black Panthers a decade before, would confirm white people's belief that revolution was imminent, and the police would conclude that they would soon be victims of seething black anger.

The police and the white-owned newspapers would publicly blame blacks for the horrific crimes. Blacks would violently revolt, and an apocalyptic race war would ensue. As it raged, the Manson family would hide in a large hole that Manson claimed to have found in Death Valley, where they would be safe from the chaos that would prevail around them.

Ultimately, the superior physical nature of the blacks would overcome the more numerous but physically weaker whites, and blacks would emerge from this race war the victors. The United States would now be a country of all black people, having successfully exter-

minated the whites. However, it would soon be clear to the blacks that, because of their inherent mental inferiority, they could not run the country. Things would begin to fall apart.

At this point, Manson and his followers – now the only white people left – would emerge from their hiding place and make their presence known. Blacks, now realizing that they needed white people to run the country, would greet them as saviors. Manson and his family would now be in charge of the United States, served by a dutiful and grateful population of blacks.

Hearing this in detail for the first time, I must have had a look of utter incredulity on my face, because Steve said, "Don't believe it? Neither did we." But as Manson's followers were rounded up, and questioned in detail, they each confirmed this was the plan of *Helter Skelter*.

Writing this today, it is still hard to believe that any group of people – even disaffected, drugged-out and barely educated teenagers – could come to believe such a fantastic and illusory story, much less commit depraved murders in furtherance of it. Yet, that is exactly what they did.

This week I cannot help but think about Germany, Rwanda, Bosnia, Jonestown, and, of course, Manson's ranch ... maybe they are all the same. The leader's view adopted by a group willing, even anxious, to be led down the path of anger, hate, and then violence. You can see it in their adoring faces. The leader names someone to scorn, to hate ... they cheer, and roar; he has validated their own fear and suspicion, given them someone to blame. The leader nods in approval, and the roar increases. The poison pot of fear, hate, and endless vanity is fully stirred.

The leader speaks, and is heard in Gilroy, Dayton, and El Paso. Cause and effect? Well, isn't this the same poison that we have seen do its work so many times before? ○

The Rotary Club of Altadena Presents

# Concerts in the Park

In Cooperation with LA County Parks & Recreation



PEOPLE OF ACTION

All concerts are FREE and start at 7:00 PM in the Amphitheater at Farnsworth Park  
568 East Mt. Curve Ave., Altadena, CA 91001 • Visit: Our *Concerts in the Park* FaceBook Page

## 23rd Annual Summer Concert Series Schedule - 2019

The Answer to Classic Rock ( <i>Classic Rock</i> ).....	Saturday, July 06
Blue Breeze Band ( <i>Motown, Funk, Soul, R&amp;B</i> ) .....	Saturday, July 13
Floyd & the Flyboys ( <i>New Orleans R&amp;B, Jump, Swing, Blues, Roots Rock</i> )	Saturday, July 20
ReLoVe ( <i>Reggae, Soul</i> ) .....	Saturday, July 27
Live From Earth ( <i>Pat Benatar Tribute</i> ).....	Saturday, August 03
Upstream ( <i>Reggae, Soca, Caribbean Tunes</i> ) .....	Saturday, August 10
My Generation ( <i>British Invasion Genre Rock</i> ).....	Saturday, August 17
Dog N Butterfly ( <i>Heart Tribute</i> ).....	Saturday, August 24



And ... For The Grand Finale ... Saturday, September 07  
Tribute to **THE WHO**

### THE WHO EXPERIENCE

Presented by the Sheriff's Support Group of Altadena



## Altadena Rotary



AND Sponsors: Frank Cunningham of Gently Guided, a personalized senior living referral service;  
Georgia Rutherford in memory of Don Rutherford, first president of SSGA;



# THE *Mixx*

**On September 3,  
BLUES CHANNEL  
hosts the Tuesday  
jam at The Mixx.  
Come on down for  
dinner, drinks and  
music from 8-12.**



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