



the CLARIFIER

CLAREMONT ROTARY NEWSLETTER

IN SERVICE ABOVE SELF

Claremont Rotary Year 96 | Week 31 | Jan. 31 2025

Program: National Forest Firefighting, Steve Robles

Submitted by Harry Sparrow



Alan Jack introduced his friend and neighbor, Steve Robles. Robles has significant Claremont roots. He has lived in Claremont for 25 years. His children went to school in the Claremont Unified School District and he coached varsity basketball. Steve “retired” as a firefighter after a 30-year career as a firefighter. His retirement did not last even a week. He was offered and took a job with an organization called Perimeter Solutions the same week he retired from work for Los Angeles County.

Steve said that Alan had asked him to do a presentation in a few weeks, but then showed up at Steve’s door a few days ago to ask if he could do the presentation now. Steve apologized that the video and slides he had planned to show weren’t possible to pull together on such short notice.

Prior to his short-lived retirement Steve had been working for eight years as a superintendent of a Hot Shot crew. Steve gave a brief description of what a hot shot crew is and does, but here is a more detailed description courtesy of Wikipedia. “In the [United States](#), a Shot Crew, officially known as an Interagency

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Randy Lopez is Inducted and pinned by Beatrice Casagran

Wilma Marchant attains Blue Badge



Next Meeting February 7
Uncommon Good, Randy Lopez
12:10 pm @ HUGHES CENTER
[ZOOM LINK](#)

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Rotary, the Meeting.

Submitted by Chris Hayes-Shaner

President **Susie Ilsley** called the meeting to order with a serious clang of the bell. Our song leader, **Chris Hayes**, accompanied by **Cameron Troxell** on the piano led us in the singing of our *Smile* song followed by *America the Beautiful*.



WELCOME GUESTS & VISITING ROTARIAN

Marla Lefler to introduce her son **Paul**.

Kebokile introduced **Anne Thorward**, President of the Newcomers Access Center.

Beverly Jack accompanied her husband **Alan**



Steve Robles is our speaker

Randy Lopez with **Beatrice Casagran** for his last meeting as guest. Beatrice was honored to welcome her husband, as she met him at 15 years old, and have been Best Friends since. He just left the Claremont Chamber and is now bringing people together at Uncommon Good.

Juan Ossa with **Jerry Tambe**

Ken Johnson with his wife **Susie**

Afterwards Chris led the attendees in singing our *Welcome* song.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Susie announced that the multi-club social sponsored by LaVerne last night was great!!

Another photo of the club will be taken by Peter Weinberger on February 14th before lunch.



Bonita Ramos announced a Rotoplast Trip in Uganda from June 7-22. The group needs two non-medical people for medical records and sterilizing. If you are interested in attending, please let Bonita know. It's a life-changing experience.

Bonita also announced about the District Grant received by for Ability First, which enabled them to get new kitchen equipment. If you are interested in helping with cooking, please let her know. Only one hour is required a week.

Rich Laughton talked about Together We Prepare, which will be a two-day event at El Roble. 475 students will participate this year. Classes will be held on Thursday and Friday. Sign up for this "all hands event." This is the club's oldest, continuous event. It started in 1987.

Buff Wright announced that the Clarifier is in need of note-takers. The more people we have taking notes, the less frequently one has to do it! Chris Hayes and Harry Sparrow

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY by Bobby Hyde

Do You Believe In Magic?

"The Magic of Rotary", is the theme for RI this year (July 24 - June 25). I want to focus on that for today's inspirational message. Today is the last day of January and tomorrow is the first day of February. January is a time of renewal, and a chance to embrace the new. It is the month for dreaming and planning, which is magical. February's magic lies in the heart. It brings warmth and love to all.

February teaches us that love knows no season and to cherish the ones you love. The Magic of Rotary is relevant yesterday, today and tomorrow. Think of the projects we have done, are doing and the ones we are about to do. Projects like Bill's Bikes for Kids, Together We Prepare, TOC, and Hope Partners just to name a few. Think of our speaker programs, our socials and our Foundation. All these bring magic into the lives of people that they serve and certainly allows us as Rotarians to live the motto "Service Above Self," which itself is magical. There is a quote attributed to Roald Dahl, a British author and poet who wrote children's books and short stories, which goes like this: "Those who don't believe in magic will never find it! I finish with the lyrics of a favorite song of mine from 1977, a disco song by John Paul Young. I will not sing it. Please, everyone close your eyes, dwell on the words and imagine the magic.

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have been doing a terrific job, with Buff pitching in when they can't.

Brett O'Connor reported that the Stover Music Contest had nine contestants and lots of positive feedback. A 9th Grader moved on to the regional competition.



SERGEANT John Allen

John attended the Multi Club Social and it had a good turnout! **Kebokile's** colorful outfit with Rotary emblems was well received!

CHS Interactors devoured five dozen cookies provided by **Wilma Marchant** and **Jerry (and Marge) Goldman**.

Buff Wright, Sylvia Whitlock, Kebokile Dengu-Zvobgo, Lisa Hahn and **Bernadette Kendall** attended the Peace Conference, and all said it was great! Buff pointed out that the keynote speaker emphasized that while there are lots of conditions for war (poverty, ethnic strife, etc.) that war is essentially a choice for resolving conflict.

Randy Lopez was fined as a new Red badge member.

Brett O'Connor has been secretary now for a month, and forgot to put Randy's bill in his new member folder, having left that responsibility behind.

Mark Carson is a Chiefs Fan!

Multi Club Social



DG Mike and Sylvia Driebe at the Multi-Club Social. Others below from our Club, LaVerne, Sunrise, and Upland



Thought for the Day, continued from p. 2

Love Is In The Air

Love is in The Air. Everywhere I look around, love Is in the air, Every sight and every sound

And I don't know if I'm being foolish. Don't know if I'm being wise

But it's something that I must believe in, and it's there when I look in your eyes

Love Is in the air, in the whisper of the trees

Love Is in the air, in the thunder of the sea

And I don't know if I'm just dreaming, don't know if I feel sane.

But it's something that I must believe in, and it's there when you call out my name

Love Is in the air in the rising of the sun.

Love Is in the air when the day is nearly done

And I don't know if it's an illusion, don't know if I see it true

But it's something that I must believe in, and it's there when I reach out for you

Love is in the air.

AND IT IS JUST PURE MAGIC!!!!

Firefighting, from p. 1

Hotshot Crew (IHC), is a team of 20-22 elite wildland firefighters that mainly respond to large, high-priority fires across the country and abroad. They are assigned to work the most challenging parts of the fire and are considered strategic and tactical wildland fire experts. Hotshot crews are considered the most highly trained, skilled and experienced wildland firefighters, along with smokejumpers. They are qualified to provide leadership for initial-attack and extended-attack on wildland fires. Hotshots are trained and equipped to work in remote areas for extended periods of time with minimal logistical support. They are organized by agencies such as the [United States Forest Service](#), [National Park Service](#), [Bureau of Indian Affairs](#), [Bureau of Land Management](#), and state/county agencies. The [National Inter-agency Fire Center](#) coordinates hotshot crews on the federal level.”

After reading that description what Steve said is totally believable. He said you can drop him and his crew in the most remote area imaginable and they will stay and work there for 30 or more days as long as you keep them supplied with water and MREs (meals ready-to-eat).

Perimeter Solutions produces fire-abatement chemicals. It is Steve’s job to make certain the right kinds and amounts of these products are available at the right spots to successfully fight wildfires. Perimeter Solutions works with SCE, Los Angeles and Orange counties as well as others. Besides the product, they have three Chinook helicopters with that, assuming there are no gale-force winds, can fly after dark when others cannot. Their teams are Quick Reaction Forces (QRF).

At this point Steve asked for questions.

John Tulac asked about Steve’s company’s product. Steve said it is a fire retardant that is basically a fertilizer, but like McDonalds “secret sauce,” he cannot reveal more.

Rich Laughton asked about turnaround time and logistics. Steve said they set up mobile retardant bases (MRBs) as close to the fire as possible and keep restocking these from sites like San Bernardino airport.

Peter Weinberger asked how they determine the best locations to work from when fighting a fire. Steve said that they do advance work in areas that are defined as high risk for fires and map out where they think the best locations to work from are should there be a fire. They actually stage some equipment that likely would

be needed at these sites.

Buff Wright asked why there isn’t more publicity about Hot Shots. Steve said they just don’t do it, “We’re not in it for publicity, just to help.” Buff also asked how Steve came to be a firefighter. He said his curiosity took him to the Forest Service and he just fell in love with it. He also said that there is an age limit of 57 for the folks who are on the hot shot crews and so he will age out of it soon.

Chris Hayes asked where the company, people and product are located. Headquarters for Perimeter Solutions is in Sacramento. Rancho Cucamonga is one of the locations where the product is produced. Steve works via people in Pocatello, Idaho.

Bridget Healy talked about how a fire in her youth had impacted her mental well being and asked if firefighters sometimes had PTSD-like reactions from their firefighting experiences. Steve said yes they do, but it sounded like he and other fire fighters largely tend to tough it out, “nobody cares how you feel, just do the job.” Bridget also asked if his organization had been involved in the Eaton and Palisades fires. The answer was yes and he, personally, got a call for Eaton.

John Tulac asked given that Santa Ana winds experienced recently in the fires made fighting them extraordinarily difficult, how can a community like Claremont prepare for a fire. Steve said much of it has to do with cutting down vegetation, but budget cuts in recent years had severely limited such efforts.

Harry Sparrow asked if the budget cuts were local, state or federal. Steve said they were federal.

John Howland asked if firefighter equipment and procedures have improved. Steve said yes. They have looked at lessons learned from incidents where there have been fatalities. They tell the firefighters to focus on risk and reward; is the risk to your life so great that the potential reward is not worth it. He said as a chief he always focused on “I have to bring these kids home safe.” John followed up with a question about drones. Yes, they are used and were used extensively in the recent fires.

Ken Johnson, Susie’s husband commented on a firefighter he knew that he thought was exemplary. Steve said he knew the person and concurred.



Susie Ilsley
Claremont Rotary
President
2024-25

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Feb 7	Uncommon Good, Randy Lopez
Feb 14	Art Therapy, Elizabeth Preston
Feb 20-21	Together We Prepare



Feed the pig at the meeting, send fines and donations for Polio Plus [here](#), or mail your check to:
Claremont Rotary
Foundation
PO Box 357
Claremont 91711



Bacon Bits
Let's fill up the pig!

Website

Information about the club and back editions of this newsletter are available on [DACdb](#) and claremontrotary.com

Visit: [Taste of Claremont 2025](#)

Join us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/RotaryofClaremont

Club [Bylaws](#) and [Policies](#) are posted for member access on DACdb

February Birthdays

- Anna Torres 2/9
- Pat Hauducoeur 2/11
- John Allen 2/12
- Corina Christiansen 2/13
- Rizek Abusharr 2/14, Anita Hughes 2/16
- Bernadette Kendall 2/17
- Ian Standley 2/18, Heather Lyn 2/19
- Abby Pascua 2/21, Roger House 2/23
- Beatrice Casagran 2/24

Sergeants committee gathers before each meeting .
Anyone is welcome to share information!!
Steve Juliari, chair

Clarifier Committee

- Chris Hayes Shaner
- Harry Sparrow
- Alan Jack (ph)
- Peter Weinberger (ph)
- Beatrice Casagran (ph)
- Buff Wright, *editor*

YOU?