



The Award Winning
Malibu Rotary Club **Surfwriter**

December 18, 2013

Official Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Malibu
 Malibu Rotary Club President William Wishard

Edited by Dr. John W. Elman
 Pictures by Dr. John W. Elman, MCLE, and Malibu Times

In This Issue (click underlined topics for web link when connected to the Internet)

- Next Malibu Rotary Club Meeting January 8, 2014 at noon (with Fellowship starting at 11:30 a.m.) in LC152 at Pepperdine Drescher Campus. Speaker will be Griselda Espinoza who will give her Craft Talk
- Malibu Rotary Club Sponsors Rex and Friends Foundation
- Rotary District Breakfast on January 14
- Next Major Malibu Rotary Club Event is the Malibu Rotary Club Middle and High School Singing Competition at Pepperdine's Stauffer Chappel on Thursday January 16 at 6:30 p.m.

- Check [Calendar](#) on Malibu Rotary website MalibuRotary.org
- Malibu Rotary Club Website: www.MalibuRotary.org
- Rotary International Website: www.Rotary.org
- Rotary District 5280 Website: www.rotary5280.org/
- Rotary District 5280 “Rotarians Doing Business With Rotarians”
Website: <http://yp5280.org/>
- RI President (2013-2014) Ron D Burton
- Rotary District 5280 Governor (2013-2014): Doug Baker
- Assistant Governor for Malibu Rotary Club: Alice Muntean (2013-14)

Oscar Mondragon and the Malibu Community Labor Exchange





Oscar Mondragon (pictured above) was introduced to the Malibu Rotary Club at the Dec 18th meeting by one of the board of directors of the Malibu Community Labor Exchange, Richard Elkes.

Oscar is a recipient of a 2013 Malibu Times Dolphin Award. In profiling him Melody Magruder wrote:

Oscar Mondragon is the executive director of the Malibu Labor Exchange. His passion for workers' rights was born in 1970s activism with the United Farm Workers. Mondragon marched with renowned labor organizers César Chávez and Dolores Huerta, and learned from him that helping people help themselves led to economic prosperity for all. Those lessons of nonviolent activism helped Mondragon form Malibu's Labor Exchange back in 1993, when the city didn't have much to offer itinerant workers. Mondragon believed that every worker deserved to be treated with respect and dignity, and he worked hard to match potential local employers with the sometimes homeless day laborer – gardening, housekeeping, landscaping – they needed. Eventually, the Labor Exchange trailer became a familiar fixture in the city center, and a cautious mutual trust was

established.

"We did basic background checks and evaluated skills of everyone," Mondragon said. "We survive on donations, with no support from the city and now, we have workers come from as far as Oxnard. Malibu employers treat them well and the pay is better than on farms."

Mondragon knows a little about the life of a seasonal worker. He was born in Mexico City and his father brought the family to California with the Bracero Cultural Program after World War II. His family would travel from Salinas to the Imperial Valley, making schooling a luxury Mondragon and his siblings never got to enjoy.

"I was self-taught," he says simply.

The Labor Exchange was not readily embraced 20 years ago and local citizens like Martin Sheen helped show the way to acceptance.

"At the time, the key thing was to establish the Labor Exchange as a working entity, not a charitable effort," Sheen said. "Everyone was very aware of the over-privileged vs. the under-privileged dynamic. The Sheriff's Department was key to our efforts and Oscar gave us credibility."

The Malibu Community Labor Exchange is a community created not for profit organization that provides an organized and supportive place for the people of Malibu to hire and be hired, creating opportunities for the unemployed to build independence and self-sufficiency through work. The Malibu Community Labor Exchange opened its doors and hosted its first work lottery on August 31, 1993. Today, the City of Malibu continues to contract with the MCLE to run the site at a trailer office on L.A. County property near the Malibu Civic Center and County Courthouses.

At the Malibu Rotary Club meeting Oscar explained how he, as the only employee of MCLE, was charged with overcoming the resistance from the community to having the Labor Exchange, and how he had to build a positive image and trust between the community and the workers. He wanted to show that the Malibu Community Labor Exchange is an asset and not a nuisance. Like Rotary, it must be of service to the community.

Oscar recalls some of the events of his first year at the Labor Exchange in 1993. That was a fire year for Malibu. A couple months after Malibu Community Labor Exchange began a raging fire storm came over the hill and laborers from the new MCLE went up the hill and saved several homes, using garden hoses and buckets of pool water. Later when the rains came they would help in placing sand bags.

Besides the service of providing for day laborers in the Malibu community, MCLE teaches English has a

second language to the workers, many of whom are from central America, and also computer skills are taught. MCLE does not ask for documentation from the workers, but does require that they have a photo ID. Many employers only want workers who have a social security number and Oscar says that the employers who ask for workers with social security number will only be sent those that have that documentation. The amount that workers are paid, liability insurance for workers, and any declarations of taxes are between the employer and the worker. All that the Malibu Community Labor Exchange does is get the worker and potential employer together. The rest is up to the employer and worker, and MCLE does not charge either for the service.

Some of the people who come to the MCLE are homeless and hungry. For these people Oscar says the best that MCLE can provide them is sometimes just a peanut butter sandwich. Oscar said that only about 15% to 20 % of the people who come to the MCLE get jobs and that also 15 to 20% of those seeking work are homeless.

Oscar said that there have always been certain people in Malibu who have supported the MCLE. Despite this, and with the bad economy, it appeared last year that MCLE might not continue when they were \$5,000 in debt. Oscar said he is grateful to Pepperdine University because they were able to raise \$11,000 to help Malibu Community Labor Exchange Continue.

In 2013 the Labor Exchange celebrated its will celebrate its 20th Anniversary. Having registered over 15,000 workers and helped facilitate thousands of day jobs at no cost to the workers or the hirers, Malibu's Labor Exchange is one of the oldest such hiring sites for day laborers serving all races and backgrounds in the state.



David Zielski and his recent trip to talk to members of the Entebbe Rotary

Club about installation of RainCatcher in Entebbe, Uganda

David Zielski return from his recent trip to Entebbe Uganda to tell us that Rain Catcher is now involved with 8 new projects in bringing water to the local villages. He successfully met with a Rotary Club in Entebbe and a projects that is being sponsored by the Beverly Hills Rotary Club and the Malibu Rotary Club is ready to go. David showed a video of a typical greeting given to him and the Rain Catcher group by the villages he visits. He gave a brief report at the December 18 Malibu Rotary Club but this will be more detailed at a future meeting in 2014.

Malibu Rotary Club Was One of the Sponsors of Rex and Friends

Foundation Concert

The Malibu Rotary Club was one of the sponsors of Rex and Friends Foundation concert on Sunday, December 15 at the Masonic Lodge at Hollywood Forever Cemetery. Thanks to Maggie Luckersath 10 people represent the Malibu Rotary Club attended this fundraiser concert for the Rex & Friends

Charitable Foundation.

Rex Lewis-Clack, world renowned Venezuela-born classical pianist Gabriela Monterao and London-born world Class opera singer SamMcElroy emceed, told an amazing biographical story on how he met Rex and became his singing tutored and performed with Rex at this unforgettable concert. They were joined by the students of Performing Arts Studio West, whose mission is to provide an



environment where adults with developmental disabilities can enhance self-esteem, social skills, and employment opportunities through participation in a performing arts curriculum combined with a vocational training component.

Together they performed a varied program of classical, jazz, pop and improvised music, and explained the crucial role of music in the lives of those with blindness and autism.

Members of the Malibu Rotary Club were among the first to become aware of Rex when a neighbor of his mother, who was a piano teacher, spoke at our club when Rex was about 5 years old. Born blind, Rex was diagnosed with autism as a toddler. He had an unusual reaction to sounds, and could not communicate at all. His father had given Rex a small musical keyboard and the magic of music changed his life--he inherently understood music and through music he was able to start communicating to others.

Once that happened, and his ability to recognize musical sounds appreciated, he was labeled a musical genius (piano). By the age of 7, musicologists became astounded by Rex's ability to play back complex piano pieces he had heard only once, and then transpose them into other keys or improvise off themes with little effort. Considered a prodigious musical savant, Rex ranks as one of less than 50 people throughout history to combine blindness, intellectual disability and prodigious musical ability.

Gabriela Montero

Gabriela Montero's visionary interpretations have won her a quickly expanding audience and devoted following around the world. Her engagements include acclaimed performances with the New York Philharmonic, LA Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, Cleveland Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall, and WDR Sinfonieorchester Koln. Recent collaborators include conductors Claudio Abbado, Gustavo Dudamel, James Gaffigan, Lorin Maazel, Yannick Nezet-Seguin, and Leonard Slatkin. In recital she has appeared at the festivals of Salzburg, Istanbul, Kuhr, Ravinia, and Tanglewood, as well as the Koln Philharmonie, Tonhalle Dusseldorf, Kennedy Center and Library of Congress in Washington DC, Wigmore Hall in London, Gewandhaus Leipzig, National Arts Centre Ottawa, Orchard Hall Tokyo and at the 'Progetto Martha Argerich' Festival in Lugano where she is invited annually.

In addition to her brilliant and nuanced classical interpretations, Gabriela Montero's unique personal style comes from her improvisational gifts. "I connect to my audience in a completely unique way – and they connect with me. Because improvisation is such a huge part of who I am, it is the most natural and spontaneous way I can express myself". Today, in both recital and after performing a concerto, Gabriela often invites her audience to participate in asking for a melody for improvisations.

A special feature of the Rex and Friends Concert was her asking someone from the audience to shout out a melody, and then she would improvise and play that melody in different styles, followed by Rex also improvising and playing the song in different styles.

A concert YouTube video narrated by Sam McElroy previews the improvisational performance that

would take place with Gabriela and Rex:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wewlxm40Fm4>

In the picture below Rex (L) plays piano and sings with and his Friends, Patrick Storey, Alan Davis, August McAdoo, and Igor Zaninovich, all students from the Performing Arts Studio West, along with a faculty guitar accompanist-singer from the PASW school.



Those who attended this special evening will not forget it. When another concert featuring Rex and Friends is planned put it on your calendar and go--you will not be sorry.

Rex's biography "Rex--A Mother, Her Autistic Child and the Music that Transformed their Lives," by Cathleen Lewis was published by Thomas Nelson in 2008 and subsequently translated into seven foreign languages.

Other News From the Last Malibu Rotary Club Meeting

Malibu Rotary Club President Bill Wishard again asked for donations and stories for people contributing to "Happy Dollars." **Kelly Sagona** contributed and announced that she had been raising

money selling Christmas trees for charity in Las Vegas and also had needed help with a place to store trees in Malibu but was helped by our speaker Oscar in that regard. Kelly also announced she was going to be working with kids on probation from local detention centers in doing graffiti removal. She would tell us more about that in the future. Bill contributed Happy Dollars on the success that Maggie had in the December 11 holiday party and the group of Rotarians and the general job she had done with the Rex and Friends Benefit. Although Malibu Rotary Club was one of the sponsors of the event this was not in the printed program. Also not on the program was the fact that the fund raiser was raising money for the Performing Arts Studio West. Maggie told the producers of the faux pas at intermission and an announcement was made on stage by emcee Sam McElroy that the Malibu Rotary Club was one of the sponsors (and benefits were going to Performing Arts Studio West scholarships). Bill said this recognition was even better than having it in the printed program. Bill also announced that Youth Co-Chair of the Malibu Rotary club for this year are new members **Grizelda Espinoza** and **David Zielski** both of whom have students at Malibu High School, where we hope to start an Interact Club. Others contributing Happy Dollars were **Irene Bettler** and guest **Jeanne Custis** both of whom praised the good of Rotary.

Rotary District Breakfast on January 14

The District Breakfast marks the half-way point of our Rotary year, but we're just getting started!! We are going to be getting **LOUD** in the second half as the work of YOUR club will be showcased, publicized and envied by all! Come and find out how all this is going to happen. We'll kick off the most productive, entertaining, rewarding and fun six months this District has ever had. The District Breakfast is also your first shot at reservations for the District Conference, which is sure to be a sell-out. There will be some "torch-y jazz numbers" to kick off the morning, along with a kangaroo!



KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT DISTRICT BREAKFAST: MARK GERAGOS

Geragos has been named “Lawyer of the Year” in both Criminal and Civil arenas and was named by California Law Business Magazine as “one of the 100 most influential attorneys in California” 3 years in a row.

As the principal with the internationally known trial law firm of Geragos & Geragos, Mark Geragos gained a national reputation as a trial lawyer due to a number of high-profile cases he has won over the years. In Geragos' recently published book, *Mistrial*, he draws the curtain on the courtroom's ugly realities from stealth jurors who secretly swing for a conviction, to cops who regularly lie on the witness stand, to defense attorneys terrified of going to trial. Ultimately, he questions whether a justice system model drawn up two centuries ago before blogs and television is still viable today. Geragos is a legal expert and prominent criminal defense attorney who has worked on everything from celebrity media-circuses to equally compelling cases defending individuals desperate to avoid the spotlight. Shining unprecedented light on what really goes on in the courtroom, Mark will take an enjoyable, fun look at a system that rarely lets you see behind the scenes.

Members of the Malibu Rotary Club are encouraged to attend the Rotary District Breakfast and towards that end the Malibu Rotary will subsidize the normal admission of \$35.00 (\$40 after Jan 7) by paying for new members and charging current members only \$10.00.

Malibu Rotarians who said they will go are **Griselda Espinoza, Bill Wishard, Hubert and Maggie Luckerath, John Elman, David Baird, Margo Neal, Irene Bettler, David Zielski, Jimmy Mehmon Mon, Kelly Sagona and Peter Formosa.**

Final tally must be in before Jan 7.

Please see Malibu Rotary Club Website www.maliburotary.org for latest Calendar and future speakers and facebook pages for other news.

Like Rotary Club of Malibu on

facebook

Calendar

(All Malibu Rotary Club meetings are at 12:00 Noon in LC 152 at the Pepperdine Drescher campus Villa Graziadio Executive Center unless otherwise noted)

Dec 25, 2013

Christmas Holiday (no meeting)

"Christmas Holiday (no meeting)"

Jan 01, 2014

Happy New Year (no Rotary meeting)

"Watch the Rotary Float in the Rose Parade"

January 8th, 2014

Griselda Espinoza will give her craft talk

Jan 14, 2014 Tuesday Rotary District Breakfast , 7:00AM Registration

7:25 AM Breakfast

Speaker is Trial

Attorney Mark Geragos

District 5280 Breakfasts are held at the Westin LAX Hotel, 5400 W. Century Blvd., Los Angeles CA 90045. Registration opens at 7:00 a.m. Free self-parking is available in the hotel parking structure. Valet parking at Westin Hotel rates. **Geragos has been named "Lawyer of the Year" in both Criminal and Civil arenas and was named by California Law Business Magazine as "one of the 100 most influential attorneys in California" 3 years in a row**

Jan 15, 2014 (no noon meeting at Pepperdine)

Jan 16, 2014

Malibu Rotary Hi School Singing Competition

6:30 p.m. at Stauffer Chapel