

# Los Altos Hills

Photo by Aaron Alvarez Mendoza



Behind the Scenes of  
Fine Art in the Park with  
**Dick Simko**  
August 10-11

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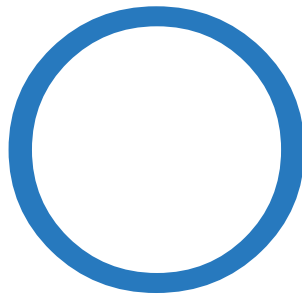
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# Behind the Scenes of Fine Art in the Park with **Dick Simko**

By Abbie Burgess | Photos by Aaron Alvarez Mendoza



In August 10th and 11th, you'll find Los Altos Hills resident Dick Simko helping put on the Los Altos Rotary's 49th Annual Fine Art in the Park event. He is looking forward to "A great show! We will have about 150 fine artists from a strong group including many repeat participants."

### Behind the Scenes of the Art Show

"I like to support a good cause, something that has a chance of enduring," shares Dick. "I like Fine Art in the Park—it is at a good scale, benefits many local organizations, and grants deserving students scholarships."

His favorite purchases from past shows are landscape photos of the western United States by Vern Clevenger and John Gavrilis.

"Fine Art in the Park is a large and established fine art show produced by the Los Altos Rotary Club," he explains. "It takes place in Lincoln Park in Los Altos each August and is

the biggest fund-raising effort of the Club. Net proceeds from the show range about \$100,000 and are distributed to scholarships for deserving local students, local charities, and veteran's support."

Artists' sales from the event are about \$500,000—a lot of art moves in two days. "The show profit concept is based primarily on renting out booth space on the lawn to artists, collecting 10% percent of the artists' sales, and contributions from businesses renting booths."

Dick, who has been involved with the show for seven years in Site and Operations, tells what it takes to put on a show of this magnitude which hosts as many as 10,000 visitors each year:

The planning effort begins months in advance, with selecting and securing 150 artists and beginning marketing for the fair. "The show depends on volunteer efforts from well over 100 responsible and dedicated Rotarians," Dick says. The 150 fine artists are selected by Carol Dabb, the club's experienced art professional. "The overall show coordinator wizard with more than 15 years of experience is Herb Marshall," he adds.

As Director of Operations, Dick is responsible for coordinating the show's physical requirements including mapping and marking 150 booth spaces on the 1/3 mile-long lawn. Rentals need to be coordinated—that includes half a dozen food vendor tents, a large wine garden tent, a musician's stage, 50 lawn tables and umbrellas,

three large dumpsters, and a dozen sanitary facilities. Then there are the little details that aren't noticed by visitors but are essential to a smooth-running event, such as obtaining permits and security service, coordinating off-site parking shuttles, providing refreshments for the artists, distributing 20 fire extinguishers, setting up signage and providing electrical connections. "We might use Starlink to facilitate online art purchases in the park this year," Dick adds.

When the show is over, the work continues with coordinating the take-down of 150 artist booths and other cleanup.

Whew, that task list is tiring just to read about! "So the show has a lot of moving parts and depends a great deal on several responsible core section leaders: art, marketing, finance, food and beverage, site, operations, parking, etc.," he explains. "For many years we are happy to report that artists complement the Los Altos fine art show as one of the best on the West Coast. Each year the Los Altos Rotary Club happily strives to maintain and exceed that standard for Fine Art in the Park. Please come visit and buy some fine art!"

In addition to his work with Rotary, Dick recently helped host a team of Ukrainian medical personnel for a training visit to the Veterans Hospital. Dick, who recently learned that he is part Ukrainian himself, had a grandmother who was from a village bordering Ukraine, Slovakia and Hungary. "My grandparents were humble Hungarian immigrants

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who settled near Cleveland, Ohio. My parents were born near Cleveland and spoke Hungarian half the time.”

Dick’s father was the amateur Golden Gloves boxing champion in 1938 in northeast Ohio. He later joined the Army and was the division boxing champion. He learned aircraft and auto mechanics and welding in the service. “My mother and many women worked in an aircraft manufacturing plant during the war. She said during the war you just worked and slept.”

**Los Altos Hills**

Dick and his wife Patricia met in the 1970s via two social clubs for young working professionals called Stanford Bachelors and the Peninsula Little Club that did charity work together. They married in 1978 and moved to Los Altos Hills in 1982 from a condo in south Los Altos. “We needed more family space and Los Altos Hills seemed like a good investment,” he says. They found a great school district with PAUSD, good neighbors who look out for each other, and of course, amazing weather: “Best springtime ever! Beats long snowy winters in northern states,” he says.

The climate afforded Dick a long season to pursue his previous hobbies including being a glider pilot and windsurfer. He also enjoyed skiing and amateur radio operating. Lately, he has been enjoying bocce ball and is an avid 49ers and Warriors fan.

“The area is amazing for its continued innovation and entrepreneurship,” says Dick, adding that he is fortunate to have worked with some very exceptional people. A graduate of Ohio State University, he entered the semiconductor industry working with Intel in 1973. After five years, he began an entrepreneurial path to co-found three companies that all went public – semiconductors Xicor and ISD and laser medical Spectranetics. With Xicor he had the opportunity to live in Switzerland for a year, which he remembers as a lot of hard work but a great experience that led to lasting friendships with European friends.

Dick and Patricia have two adult daughters. Errin works for Stanford Healthcare and Collette has developed a healthy vegan donut food business for people with food allergies.

To read more about the upcoming event and plan your visit, go to [rotaryartshow.com](http://rotaryartshow.com).



Dick Simko (in the hat), with Fine Art in the Park team members left to right: Bart Nelson, Sandy Mingia, Tom Johnson, Sherry Auerbach and Karen Berner.

**Event Information**

Each year a team of volunteers from the Los Altos Rotary Club presents Fine Art in the Park – one of the Bay Area’s premier open-air art shows, featuring original, juried works by some 150 artists. Fine art pieces range from paintings and sculptures, to ceramics, jewelry, and unique gifts. Entertainment, food, and beverages make this an ideal occasion for shopping and family fun.

As you stroll through the lovely park, viewing first-rate art, take comfort in knowing that your purchases go to support a great cause. All proceeds of the Rotary Fine Art in the Park show go to support a wide range of community service agencies in the Bay Area, and support international development projects in places like Nepal, Mexico, Malaysia, and Afghanistan.

The August 10-11 show is open daily from 10 am to 5:30 pm in Lincoln Park, Los Altos.

[rotaryartshow.com](http://rotaryartshow.com)