



ROTARY SPOKES

Rotary Club of Ventura

Est. May 1, 1919

"The Friendliest Club in Rotary"

April 16, 2023

FRAUD FIGHTER IN OUR CORNER



Senior Deputy District Attorney Andrew Reid presented the **Ventura County District Attorney Fraud Update** at our meeting April 12, 2023.

Fraudsters just want your money. They don't care how they get it—whether it's an old scheme like asking for money because their car broke down, or new cryptocurrency scams. But several themes are common:

1. Pay me, and you'll get more money later. One variety is the claim you have won money but need to first pay "taxes." One woman was persuaded to open a bank account and give the fraudster her user ID and password. \$70,000 appeared in the new account, supposedly a loan from the fraudster, but actually money he transferred from another of the victim's bank accounts. She was instructed to leave the money on her porch for the fraudster's "agent."

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FRAUD FIGHTER, continued

2. Verification scam. A text, email, or phone call, supposedly from a company like Netflix, Amazon, or FedEx, asks you to “verify” your account number, password, etc. This is a phishing scam to obtain your personal identifying information.

3. Unlicensed professionals. Includes a man who was supposedly a lawyer and a judge in another county, who collected thousands in “fees,” provided no services, and gave excuses why nothing was happening. Or household movers who hold your belongings hostage until you meet their financial demands. Don’t rely on a business card or a logo on their truck...verify they are licensed and insured and have good references.

4. Free government programs. “Sign here” to receive free solar cells. You have actually agreed that the work was already completed. The fraudster performs substandard work, or none at all, collects money from the government, and leaves you with a loan to pay back, secured by a super-priority lien against your home.

5. It’s an emergency! Pleas for disaster relief, or “Grandma, I’ve been arrested!” Uses a sense of urgency to cloud your judgment.

Andrew’s advice is to beware of **unsolicited** requests for money or personal identifying information.

(Another fraud was suggested during the question-answer period: **business email compromise** (BIC). A fraudster hacks into your email or the computer of your bank, real estate agent, etc. When it looks like a large transaction is about to close, like purchasing a home or a business, you receive an email or phone call instructing you to wire the money to an account that actually belongs to a “money mule” of the fraudster, or asks for account information to make the payment. By the time you realize what happened, the money is gone, and often impossible to recover. Before sending the funds, **you** should **initiate contact** with the party you have been dealing with to confirm it is legit.)

Andrew Reid has been a prosecutor for over ten years. He is currently assigned to Special Prosecutions, which ensures a level playing field in its Consumer Protection unit, prosecutes unlawful disposal of hazardous waste and makes violators pay for clean-up costs in its Environmental Protection unit, and investigates and prosecutes fraud cases including insurance fraud and real estate fraud.

MEETING APRIL 12, 2023

As we walked into the Poinsettia Pavilion, we received our long-awaited **Polo Shirts** with the club logo. Thanks to **Neal Lassila** for handling this project and helping us to project a touch of class when we are in the community!

I counted **33 members and guests**, including Rotary Ventura East President Joe Strohman and Rotaract President Olivia Strohman. Thanks to those who donated to Olivia's trip to the International Rotary Conference—she's going to Australia!

Food Affairs by Stacey served a delicious lunch of shrimp with pasta, zucchini, green salad, and fruit salad, with cookies for dessert.

President Elect Neal Lassila called the meeting to order.

Flag salute, inspirational message, and introductions: Connie Young. We should celebrate something about ourselves every day, and celebrate together. April 12 was National Grilled Cheese Day, National Licorice Day, and Only Child Day.

Songleaders: Bev Ward and Jessica Brandon. “You're a Grand Old Flag” (I really need to learn the words to that one...)

Announcement: Dan Holmes: The Navajo Water Project received a \$1 million grant from a tech company, which is enough to complete all their installations. So the Global Grant our club received for this project will be moved to another project.



Hutch Hutchinson presented a **Paul Harris Plus 6 pin** (red ruby) to Paul Harris Society Member **Larry Dawes**. Donations help fund Rotary's Polio Plus campaign. Polio vaccines have saved more than 20 million children from paralysis, but more than 10 million “zero vaccination” individuals have never been vaccinated.

Happy Dollars.

ROTARACT MEXICO BUILD

Rotaract President Olivia Strohman gave a presentation on its annual Mexico Build. Over 60 people, including Rotaract and Rotary members and members of the local community, went to Tijuana and built a 400 square foot home for a deserving family. The project builds 1 house in 1 day for 1 family. Olivia shared photographs of the project, from foundation to roof.



UPCOMING EVENTS

(For up-to-date and more complete information, check the ClubRunner app on your phone, or our web site, VenturaRotary.org)

April 19 lunch meeting: Laura van Auker, M.Ed., BCBA, Director of the **Ventura High School ASSETS program** (After School Student Education Teamwork for Success). It offers assistance with homework, snacks, and games, particularly assisting students who don't have immediate transportation home after school. Laura has been an educator for over 15 years. She started as a paraprofessional in special education and went on to obtain her Education Specialist Credential and Master's in Education at the University of California Santa Barbara. Laura taught special education classes at Hueneme Unified School District and Ojai Unified School District before becoming a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) in 2015. She strives to provide students with unique and meaningful opportunities while creating a safe and empathetic space for students to spend time after the school day. Laura enjoys biking, bodysurfing, swimming, cooking, and spending time with her family and friends.

April 21: Career Day at Pacific High School, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., followed by lunch.

April 26 lunch meeting: Sheriff James Fryhoff. (Chris Breshears' presentation on the Eye Clinic will be rescheduled.)

April 27: Board meeting, 12:00 to 1:30 p.m. Location to be announced.

April 29: Habitat for Humanity Team Build, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. As part of international Rotary at Work Day, we will be painting a mobile home of a low-income family. Location to be announced. RSVP to Clyde Reynolds.

May 12: Pacific High School Teacher Appreciation Lunch, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at 501 College Drive, Ventura. Volunteers needed—contact Madhu Bajaj.