



# ROTARY SPOKES

## Rotary Club of Ventura

Est. May 1, 1919

"The Friendliest Club in Rotary"

April 21, 2024

### PERSPECTIVES ON PEACE



On the evening of March 18, 2024, this year's 31 entries for the Staci Johnson Ingram Memorial Perspectives on Peace Scholarships were on display and enjoyed by club members, participants, and their families. The judges (shown above) included a good mixture of Rotarians and community members. This is the only local scholarship based on submissions in video, music, photography, and art, and is available for VUSD seniors. The awards will be presented at our noontime meeting May 22. Thanks to all the talented students who participated, and to Danny Quintana and the Crowne Plaza Hotel for donating the viewing space and the refreshments for the event! *(Photos by Madhu Bajaj)*



## ARROYO VERDE PARK PLAYGROUND



The City of Ventura’s Parks & Recreation Director **Stacey Zarazua** and Pacific Coast Land Design Principal **Eric Berg** spoke at our meeting April 17, 2024, about the award-winning inclusion playground at Arroyo Verde Park.

This innovative design idea had been formed before the Thomas Fire, but the destruction of the main play structure in the fire gave the city the opportunity to implement it.

Erik said, “Inclusivity is an ideal but there are always barriers in the world.” To make it as inclusive as possible, they engaged the community to find their specific needs and included their ideas in the development.

The 10,750 square foot play area officially opened April 1, 2022. It includes spaces for physical, social, sensory and cognitive play, and a “quiet” area. The overall theme is a fort. The playground features a colorful play surface, new landscaping, gathering areas, swings, hammocks, balance beams, a sensory garden, a motion-inclusive carousel, embankment climbers, and music play areas. It also features a sensory wall with recognition tiles dedicated to those who donated to the project. It is the first installation in California that has the “ground piano” in the music area. Included are places of respite using elevated planters around sycamore trees for both kids and parents to rest.

The Arroyo Verde Park Inclusive Play Area received the 2021 Project of the Year Award from the Ventura County Chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA) in the structures category for its safety performance, effective construction management, environmental considerations, and community outreach. It also won a national award for projects under 5 million dollars.



## MEETING APRIL 17, 2024

**Attendance:** 23 members and 3 guests.

**Lunch:** Salad, fruit, chicken alfredo (broccoli included) and pasta, rolls, ice cream with strawberries.

**Councilman Doug Halter** was invited to speak at 12:20 p.m. regarding city highlights.

- The Council celebrated the first time the full executive team was present at Monday night's meeting (minus the City Attorney who was fired over last weekend). They welcomed the new Assistant City Manager and the Director of Public Works.
- The city has deferred maintenance for the roads but now has requested \$7 million to improve road conditions.
- Questions raised about the future of Main Street Moves. Sales tax revenue increased during COVID (the result of closing off Main St.). An environmental impact report is needed to see what is best for the community. A permanent decision has yet to be made.



**The meeting started at 12:29 p.m. (one minute early!)**

**Flag salute/introductions: Chrissy Stamegna.** She offered words from victims of traumatic brain injury like “Never Give Up.”

**No songbirds present.....so no song!**

### **Announcements:**

**Neal** reminded members that the Ronald McDonald House Family Room (RMHFR) **Walk for Kids** is this Sunday, April 21 at San Buenaventura Beach. “Let’s win the Rotary trophy again this year!”

**Margi** announced that Laura Van Acker (**VHS Assets Director**) **needs chaperones** for a field trip on May 6<sup>th</sup> to the Ty Warner Sea Center in Santa Barbara from 1:30 – 5:15 p.m. See Margi for details.

**Madhu** reminded members that there is no lunch meeting next week (April 24) but an **evening social** that date at Chili Thai Basil. Please **RSVP for the social**, and for the **family barbecue** at Arroyo Park on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

**Saurabh** – fireworks are less than 3 months away and we are still in need of sponsorships. Please see any member of the fireworks committee.

Presentation of the recipients of the **2024 JGMRF grants** will be at our meeting June 5 (moved up from previous date of June 12).

**Fining - Dave Wellick** fined on banking/finance. Dave started a new aspect to fining – you can answer or pass the question to another member. Among the questions: The average consumer outstanding credit card balance is \$6,100. Sixty-four percent of GenX have stopped saving for retirement.



**Judy Moore and Erik Feingold** were honored as **Julius Gius Memorial Rotary Fellows**. Congratulations!



### Happy Dollars

**Judy Moore** is happy to be back in Ventura after enduring the East Coast NorEaster weather.

**Margi and Greg Wray's** optometrist has volunteered to help with the Salvation Army Mobile Vision Clinic.

**Roger Case** is squealing with delight as his property is "pig free" after 3 months.

**Neal Lassila** announced that our club will be applying for district grants for both the Mobile Vision Clinic and Perspectives on Peace.

### RYLA

Irene Henry encourages everyone to visit this link to see photos and comments of what this year's RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards) had to offer!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/district5240ryla2024>

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

**George Poulakos**  
April 21

**Yosh Narang**  
April 27

**Laura Dunbar**  
May 2

### HAPPY ROTARY ANNIVERSARY!

**Jim Deardorff**  
42 years

**Rob van Nieuwburg**  
35 years

**John Brant**  
30 years

**Curtis Cormane**  
27 years

**Chris Brashears**  
17 years

**Anup Rimal**  
12 years

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**April 21: Walk for Kids** at Buena Ventura State Beach to support **Ronald McDonald House Charities** family room at VCMC. Registration opens 8:00 a.m. Program begins 9:30 a.m. Walk begins 10:00 a.m. Wrap up at 12:00 p.m.

**April 24: NO LUNCH MEETING. EVENING SOCIAL, 6-8 p.m., at Chili Basil Thai Cuisine**, 6100 Telephone Road, Suite F, Ventura. Dinner provided, no host bar. Club members free. Guests \$20. Children welcome. RSVP by April 19.

**April 25: Board Meeting**, Crowne Plaza Hotel, 12:00-1:30 p.m.

**May 1 lunch meeting: Memorial to Steve Kipp.**

**May 4: Family BBQ and Social**, Arroyo Verde Park, Redwood Glen BBQ Area, Foothill and Day Roads, Ventura, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Contact Madhu Bajaj to volunteer.

**May 8 lunch meeting: Foothill High School Interact.**

**May 9: Fireside Chat, 6:00 p.m. Location to be announced.**

**May 10: Pacific High School Teacher Appreciation Lunch**, 501 College Dr., Ventura, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

**May 15 lunch meeting: General Assembly.**

**May 22 lunch meeting: Perspectives on Peace awards lunch.**

**May 23: Board Meeting**, Crowne Plaza Hotel, 12:00-1:30 p.m.

**May 29: NO LUNCH MEETING. EVENING MEETING at Ventura Adult & Continuing Education.**

A big thanks to Sandy Lassila for taking excellent notes at the April 17 meeting and presentation (I essentially lifted them word for word), and for providing photos from the meeting!



Thanks to Jim Deardorff for sharing this photo he took at the club meeting at the Harbortown 18 years ago.