



ROTARY SPOKES

Rotary Club of Ventura

Est. May 1, 1919

"The Friendliest Club in Rotary"

December 18, 2022

WEST END HOLIDAY EVENT

was held Saturday, December 17 at Arise Church. We served 347 kids and distributed toys, coats from Coats for Kids, earrings for Mom (made by Mary Saputo), Chick-fil-A coupons, Bibles from Arise Church, and food boxes from Food Share. The event was co-sponsored by the Boys and Girls Club with a generous donation from SoCalGas.



MEETING DECEMBER 7, 2022

Lunch—Food Affairs by Stacey served a delicious lunch of pesto salmon, latkes (potato pancakes with apple sauce and sour cream on the side), green beans, and green salad, with mini frosted muffins for dessert.

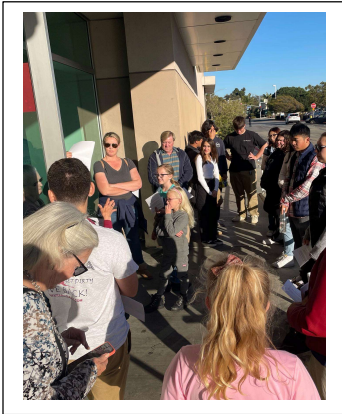
Immediate Past President/Secretary Rob van Nieuwburg called the meeting to order. He thanked **Betsy Chess** for hosting the wonderful Holiday Social. And thanks to **Doug Halter** and **Randy Encinas** for making the incredible hors d' oeuvres!

Flag salute, invocation, and introductions—Sandy Lassila. This is the season of giving. But the spirit of giving is always in the heart of Rotarians. Selflessness unites people. It is higher than self-love and is our only hope.

Songleaders—Jessica Brandon, Clyde Reynolds and Bev Ward—“God Bless America”

Announcements:

Ken Leandro: **Perspectives on Peace** posters have been posted at all the high schools in town.



Kristin Taylor: On December 9, ten Rotarians and twelve Interact and Rotaract members purchased 250 coats and jackets using the generous \$5,000 donation to **Coats for Kids** from **SoCalGas**, bringing the total to 400 coats for Saturday's **West End Holiday Event**. They were purchased at Macy's, Old Navy (both of which gave us substantial discounts), Target, and JCPenney. It was great to have Rotary, Interact and Rotaract all working together.

Meagan Smith: **Ventura High Interact** collected cans for Food Share.

Rob van Nieuwburg—Additional donations are needed for the **Salvation Army virtual Red Kettle**. Last year we collected \$75,000—this year so far only \$1,500.

Elections—The club approved next year's officers: President Neal Lassila, will serve two years. Margi Wray, Immediate Past President. Secretary Rob van Nieuwburg. Treasurer Mark Sauer. Club Service Director Madhu Bajaj. Community Service Director Joslynn Skelton. International Service Director Anil Aggarwal. Vocational Service Director Hutch Hutchinson. Youth Services Director Angela Rosales. Membership Director Abiel Acosta.

Award: Hutch presented Aaron Campbell with his first Paul Harris pin and certificate. Aaron joined in September 2021 and has been active in the club, including serving on the Board of Directors in charge of Vocational Service. Hutch showed a video about the **Rotary Foundation's Clean Water by 2030** initiative (see [Rotary.org/WASH](https://www.rotary.org/en/our-work/clean-water)). Pictures below of Aaron Campbell and RoseAnn Hill (Paul Harris +4 Award 12/9/22).



PRESENTATION—MIKE SCHWARTZ—HANUKKAH

Club member Mike Schwartz discussed the historical roots and celebration of Hanukkah. The talk (and additional material below) is based on his family's celebration of the holiday augmented by some reading.

When is Hanukkah this year? The answer is simple: the same dates it is every year—eight nights starting the 25th of Kislev! The Jewish calendar is lunar; some years have 12 months and some have 13 months, so the date shifts around on the Gregorian calendar. For 2022, Hanukkah is December 19 (which starts the evening of Sunday, December 18) through December 26.

Hanukkah celebrates the military victory in 165 B.C. of a group of Jews over the much larger army of the Syrian-Greeks. The Syrian-Greeks were ruled by Antiochus (ann-TIE-uh-cuss) IV, who was King of Syria and ruler of the powerful Seleucid (sell-LU-cid) Empire. He attempted to force the Jews in Judea to convert to Greek polytheism. He banned circumcision and killed circumcised babies by hanging. He slaughtered 40,000 Jews and sold another 40,000 into slavery.

One group who refused to convert hid in the hills. They were attacked by the Syrian-Greek army but refused to fight back because it was the sabbath. Mattathias, who had five sons, decided that if they refused to fight on the sabbath, the Jews would be wiped off the face of the earth. One of his sons, Judah Maccabee ("The Hammer") organized an army and fought back.

After three years of fighting, the Maccabees were victorious. They reclaimed the Temple in Jerusalem and removed the statute of Zeus. According to tradition, they found only enough holy oil to burn for one night. But by a miracle, it burned for eight nights while the Jews were able to prepare more oil.

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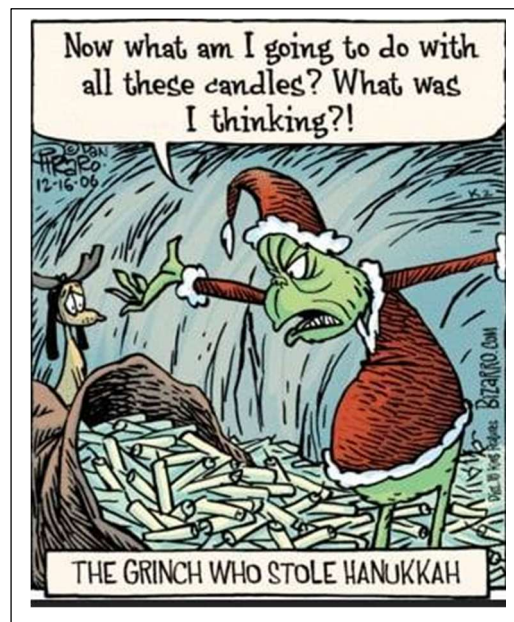
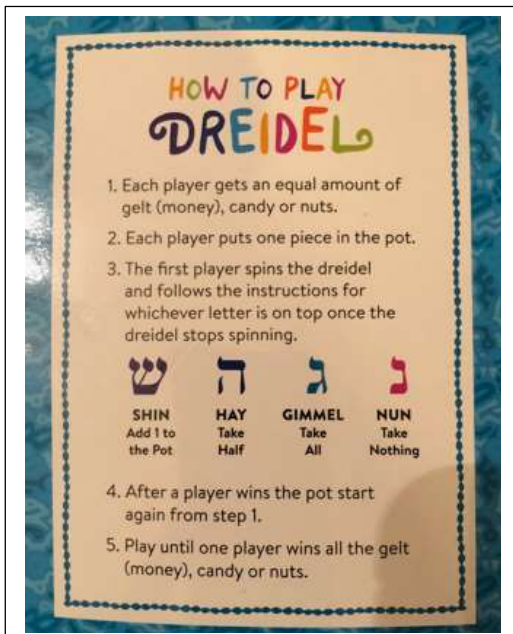
PROGRAM (continued)

The Maccabean Revolt is described in the 1st and 2nd books of Maccabees. These books are in the Apocrypha and are an interesting read. They are not included in most versions of the Bible but can be found online on in Catholic and Greek/Russian Orthodox Bibles such as the Revised Standard Version.

The First Book of Maccabees states the holiday is to be celebrated for eight days each year. The Menorah is lit, starting with one candle (plus the “shamash,” or servant candle) on the first night, two on the second night, etc. It is a joyous holiday that includes playing Dreidel, singing, eating latkes (potato pancakes, which were served at our meeting) and jelly donuts (because, like latkes, they are cooked in oil). The tradition of giving Hanukkah Gelt (Yiddish for “money”) has evolved into chocolate coins and the giving of Hanukkah presents.

Following the presentation, club members played Dreidel using chocolate Hanukkah Gelt. The Hebrew letters on the Dreidel originally stood for the Yiddish words Ganz (all), Halb (half), Nichts (nothing) and Stell (put), which are almost all the instructions you need to play the game. The letters were reinterpreted to represent a Hebrew phrase meaning “A Great Miracle Happened There” (or in Israel, “A Great Miracle Happened Here”).

Hanukkah can be considered a minor Jewish holiday because it is not mentioned in the Torah and does not require fasting or staying off work. Its prominence increased in the United States based on its proximity on the calendar to Christmas. But it retains its significance as a celebration of the victory of freedom over oppression.



UPCOMING EVENTS

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

2022

December 21—NO LUNCH MEETING THIS WEEK. Happy Holidays!

December 28 Tri-Rotary lunch meeting—meeting at Poinsettia Pavilion for fun and games with all three Ventura chapters.

2023

January 4 lunch meeting—Conversations in Rotary. Interview of a mystery club member.

January 11 lunch meeting—Presentation by **Jacquelyn Gargano** from **Ronald McDonald House Southern California**

January 14—Tours of Ronald McDonald Family Room at Community Memorial Hospital. See Sandy Lassila to sign up for the morning or afternoon tour.

January 18 lunch meeting—Connie Young will discuss the **Julius Guis Memorial Foundation**.

January 25 lunch meeting—Chrissy Stamegna will discuss the **Brain Injury Center**. She will be accompanied by **Lisa Morris**, who suffered a traumatic brain injury and has benefitted from the services of the Center.

January 26—Board Meeting, Crowne Plaza Hotel, 12:00-1:30 p.m.

ROTARY CLUB OF VENTURA IN THE NEWS

The December 14-27 edition of the *Ventura Breeze* announced our December 17 **Holiday Event for West End Families** (page 11). A Mail Box letter on page 2 mentions club member **Beverly Ward** and her husband **Kirby**. Page 3 has an article about Vision Marketplace—the article continues on page 5, with a quote from club member and owner of Very Ventura Gift Shop and Gallery **Angela Rosales**. Also on page 5 is an article about the Boys and Girls Club, with quotes and a photo of club member **Patti Birmingham**. An article on page 4 about re-elected Water Board member **Mohammed A. Hasan** mentions his membership in Rotary International (Ventura East). I haven't finished reading the paper yet, so if I missed someone, I apologize. Thanks, Sheldon, for including us in your paper! The paper is available around town, or in PDF version at <https://venturabreeze.com>.

 **HAPPY HOLIDAYS** 
FROM ROTARY CLUB OF VENTURA