



ROTARY SPOKES

Rotary Club of Ventura

Est. May 1, 1919

"The Friendliest Club in Rotary"

December 3, 2023

HOLIDAY SOCIAL



Our Holiday Social was Friday evening, December 1, at Bright Spark Brewing. We enjoyed a charcuterie table (cheese and cold cuts), a unique assortment of pizzas, sliders, a great salad, some fantastic beers, incredible desserts, and of course holiday cheer with friends. Winner of the Great Rotary Bake Off will be announced at our Dec. 6 lunch meeting. Thanks to Madhu Bajaj, Jessica Brandon, Andie Contarino, Kellye Patterson, and Monica Smith for bringing us such a great party!



SWAG BAGS Thanks to the members' businesses who provided the candy, wine, Christmas ornaments, and other Swag Bag goodies at the Holiday Social: The Akeena Group (Architecture/Construction/Management), Berkshire Hathaway/Team Dembowski (real estate), Boys & Girls Club of Greater Ventura, Coast General Insurance Brokers, CRAVE Gelato Kofi Bar, Fastsigns Ventura, and Hermance Law (estate planning).

(There's a nice article about KarynSue's business CRAVE in the November 9 *Ventura County Reporter*, page 19.)

ONDULANDO FIREWISE

Ben Rode and Nancy O'Rode gave a presentation on behalf of Ondulando Firewise at our meeting November 29, 2023. They discussed the efforts of the 640 property owners in the neighborhood to enhance fire safety, which has been recognized as a Firewise USA community.

It must have painful for them to discuss how they lost their house in the Thomas Fire, but they appeared in good spirits as they showed photos of their former house and discussed each of the fire hazards on the property, which were identified by number in the photos.



Some of the hazards they identified:



- Vegetation near the house and next to wood paneling
- Flammable vegetation like palm trees
- Plants above the roof line
- Wood mulch near home
- Flammable welcome mats & seat cushions near house
- Plastic rather than glass skylights
- Plastic rather than metal rain gutters, and full of leaves
- Single pane windows

Attic vents with ¼ inch mesh can allow embers to enter the home. They should be replaced with 1/8 inch or better yet 1/16 inch mesh. Cement or brick paving can reduce the spread of fire. There should be a 0-5 foot non-ignition zone next to the house.

You can get a FREE visit to your home followed by recommendations to harden your home against wildfire. It's up to you to follow the recommendations or not. Sign up on the website for FireSafe Council, Ventura Regional.

Ondulando Firewise has a free showing of *The Perfect Firestorm: The Thomas Fire Story* this Tuesday, Dec. 5, at 7 p.m., Poinsettia Pavilion (with refreshments yet)!

MEETING NOVEMBER 29, 2023

Attendance: 36 members and guests. While the exterminators were tenting our house for termites, I dragged myself away from the funky Airbnb on Thompson Blvd. we were staying at to attend the meeting.

Lunch: A delicious lunch of Tuscan chicken, roasted potatoes, carrots, green salad, fruit, and chocolate cake.

Flag salute/introductions/inspirational message: Anne Paul King. Among the frenzy and stress of the final month of the year, research shows meditation can displace anxiety after just one session. She taught us “CPR”: Calm, Peaceful, Relaxed. As you inhale, say “I am.” As you exhale, say “Calm.” Continue the pattern as you say, “I am Peaceful” and “I am Relaxed.” (I feel better already!)

Song: Clyde Reynolds and Jessica Brandon: “America the Beautiful”

Announcements:

Neal Lassila: Our January 3 meeting will be the **Club Assembly**. We will get a report on the Beachside Bash, and a report from our new Treasurer, Brenda Allison-Hutchison.

Lynda Girstman: Memorial service for **Shiela Fattarelli** is Saturday, December 2.

Madhu Bajaj presented gifts to the lucky **raffle winners** who RSVP'd early for the Holiday Social: Kristin Taylor, Saurabh Bajaj,* Rob van Nieuwburg,* and George Poulakos.* (*Why do all our recent Presidents have names that are difficult to spell? I think it's a plot to make life difficult for the newsletter editor!) Madhu didn't know what the gifts were, and neither do I.

Jessica Brandon: **Thank you** for all the support she has received from our members.

Judy Moore: Sign-ups in progress to volunteer for the December 16 **Westside Holiday Event**. (See attached flier.)

Kristin Taylor: **Coats for Kids** will need 600-700 coats, jackets, and heavy sweatshirts for the Westside Holiday Event. You can bring donated items to the next meeting. We will be going to the Ventura College Marketplace on Saturday, December 2, to buy items for the event.

Chris Brashears: (1) Thank you for those who participated in the **Turkey Trot**. The event donated \$6,000 to our **eye clinic**.

(2) **Need volunteer Bellringers** for December 9 at Walmart, Smart & Final, and Big Lots.

Brenda Allison-Hutchinson: She will not be at our next meeting (December 6) but any money can be given to Assistant Treasurer Rob van Nieuwburg .

Happy Dollars.

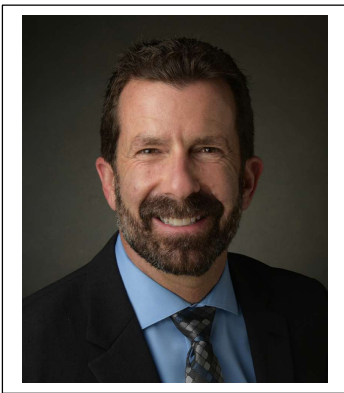
Fining: **Jeff Lambert** quizzed us about Peanuts comics.



Mark Sauer was awarded a **Julius Gius Memorial Rotary Foundation fellowship** based on a contribution to the fund by **Harald Wulff**. Congratulations!

UPCOMING EVENTS

(For more complete and up-to-date information, check the ClubRunner app on your phone, or our website)



December 6 lunch meeting: Ventura City Manager Bill Ayub (pronounced A-yoob). Bill was appointed by the Ventura City Council to serve as its city manager on August 8th, 2023. As the city manager, Bill is the chief staffer of the Council and oversees all of the City's services over 11 departments and more than 700 employees.

Prior to his service as Ventura's city manager, Bill served a 37-year career in law enforcement, including four years as the 20th sheriff of Ventura County, before retiring in January of 2023. Bill joined the Ventura County Sheriff's Office in April of 1996, after serving as a police officer for several years in the City of North Las Vegas, Nevada and the City of Port Hueneme.

Bill's diverse and extensive law enforcement experience ranges from assignments in patrol, custody, SWAT, academy instructor, investigations, and administration. Prior to being elected sheriff, Bill served at every rank from deputy sheriff through assistant sheriff.

Bill has a Master of Science degree in Emergency Services Administration from California State University at Long Beach and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from California State University at Northridge. Bill was born and raised in Ventura and has been married to his wife, Stacey, for 31 years. They have three adult children and still make Ventura their home.

Dec. 9: Salvation Army Kettle Bellringing. Contact Chris Brashears to volunteer.

Dec. 9: Decorate Rotary Rose Parade Float, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Irwindale, CA. Contact Madhu Bajaj.

Dec. 13 lunch meeting: Pacific High School Interact presentation (not fundraising).

Dec. 16: Westside Holiday Event, 9 a.m. & 1 p.m., Arise Ventura Church, 831 Olive St., Ventura. Distribute jackets, toys, and more to Westside families. Sign up online to help serve approximately 650-700 individuals. (See attached flier.)

Dec. 20 lunch meeting: The Price Is Right—Rotary Edition.

Dec. 27: NO MEETING THIS WEEK

Jan. 3 lunch meeting: Kellye Patterson, Vocational Programming.



Rotary Team Trip to Ak' Tenamit in Guatemala

Destination: AK' Tenamit, a boarding school of over 600 Indigenous Mayan students aged 12-18 in the Rio Dulce area of Eastern Guatemala. Numerous Rotary clubs (including The Fort Lauderdale Rotary Club) have built and supported this school for over 20 years.

Purpose: To gain an understanding of the needs of children in this region of Guatemala, and to provide assistance at the school, which is viewed as a model globally for its grassroots approach to vocational education.

Potential Tasks: Light construction, computer training, teaching (English and Spanish, agricultural methods, hygiene, healthcare, CPR), aiding in healthcare clinics. All ages (14 and up) and fitness levels can take part.

Dates of the Trip: February 18 to February 25, 2024

Transportation and Meals (total trip costs \$1300 to \$1800)

- **Flights: Arrivals:** American Airlines and United fly into San Pedro Sula (SPS), Honduras. Private transportation will take us from SPS to Puerto Barrios.
Departures: Private transportation will take us back to San Pedro Sula. Flights booked individually.
- **Hotels:** Villa Caribe in Livingston (7 nights); booked by host and payable at end of stay.
- **Transportation from hotels to school:** Covered motorized boats holding twelve people. \$100.00 deposit at time of registration will cover all transportation.
- **Meals:** Lunch at school restaurant; dinner at Buga Mama restaurant in Livingston. Both school-owned and managed; paid individually at end of trip.

Deadline for registration: January 8, 2024.

Contact: George Poulakos (RC of Ventura), 954-494-4387, or gjpoulakos@gmail.com

Guatemala Tomorrow Fund (501-C) website for more information: thegtfund.org



Ak' Tenamit: A Mayan Term Meaning "New Village"

Ak' Tenamit was started in 1990, with a first class of 11 boys and 3 girls. It was founded by Steve Dudenhoefer from Florida, who remains today as the Chief Technical Advisor of Asociación AK' Tenamit. The school today has over 600 Indigenous Mayan students and is managed entirely by the Q'eqchi people. It is viewed as a model globally for its effective grassroots approach to vocational education, income generation, and health care. The goals of Ak' Tenamit are to:

- Provide shelter and education for at-risk youth aged 12-18
- Help youths develop skills and gainful employment
- Establish internships and job opportunities
- Provide initial financial and emotional support for graduates to help ensure success

Hands-on experiences provide the knowledge and skills for gainful employment in Guatemala, which offers an alternative to migration. An outstanding number (85%) of students are employed shortly after graduation. This is because prior to graduation, students complete extensive work study programs in businesses off-campus. After employment, graduates pledge to give back a percentage of their income to their villages.

Rotarians have been huge supporters of Ak' Tenamit for over 20 years, contributing medical supplies and equipment, funds, and labor to build new dorms and classrooms, a floating dental clinic, solar energy equipment, computer labs, restaurant equipment and supplies, new boat engines, and family water filters.

Each year, groups of Rotarians from all over the USA spend a week at Ak' Tenamit to gain an understanding of the need of the children, and to provide assistance at the school. Districts 6930, 6990 and 5240 are now recruiting Rotarians and friends for a trip in February 18-25, 2024.

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Mahatma Gandhi



WESTSIDE

HOLIDAY EVENT



831 OLIVE ST
VENTURA CA 93001



SATURDAY
DECEMBER 16TH
9AM & 1PM

BRINGING JOY TO OUR
LOCAL, WESTSIDE, FAMILIES

TOYS, JACKETS, GIFTS & MORE!



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF GREATER VENTURA



SIGN UP ONLINE AT WWW.ARISEVENTURA.COM/HOLIDAY
*MUST BE A WEST END VENTURA RESIDENT TO ATTEND AND RECEIVE GIFTS