

# ROTARY SPOKES

*The Weekly Bulletin of the Rotary Club of Ventura, est. May 1, 1919*



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## Innovative Sustainability: Houweling's Tomatoes

Today's speaker is Kyle Stephenson, Marketing Specialist for Houweling's Tomatoes, a family owned, world-renowned greenhouse tomato grower with facilities in Camarillo, CA and Delta, British Columbia. Founded by Cornelius Houweling and now led by his son Casey, Houweling's is dedicated to delivering a full complement of scrumptious tomatoes, while constantly innovating to reduce its environmental footprint.



Unlike many greenhouse growers, who contract product under their name from other growers in Mexico, Canada, and the USA, the Houweling's brand appears only on products they grow and their tomatoes are grown from third party verified 100% Non-GMO seeds.

In 1956, Dutch horticulturist Cornelius Houweling began a small floral greenhouse and berry farm in Langley, British Columbia. Like many Dutch immigrants, Cornelius worked hard to establish a business with a reputation for quality. This was how he chose to provide for his wife and young family. Soon after his son Casey joined the business in 1976, Houweling's embarked upon an aggressive expansion plan with purchased farmland in Delta, BC; within ten years, large-scale hydroponic greenhouses with vines of plump and juicy tomatoes covered 50 acres.

Though retailers and consumers were quick to embrace the quality and consistency of Houweling's tomatoes, the northern climate limited production to just eight months a year. Displeased that his customers were forced to buy produce from Mexico in the winter months, Casey set his sights on California where he discovered the perfect conditions for greenhouse growing – Camarillo farmland with more than 300 days of sunshine a year. The facility was erected in 1996 and produces delicious varieties of tomatoes in an array of colors, shapes and sizes all year.

The Houweling's vision for sustainability is based on the principles of environmental soundness, economic feasibility

and social equity. They have made tremendous inroads toward fulfilling this vision, while providing year-round jobs for 400+ employees in Camarillo.



**RENEWABLE ENERGY-** Five acres of photovoltaic solar panels at their Camarillo site provide one megawatt of electricity. In terms of carbon dioxide reduction from conventional energy sources, this is equivalent to removing 300 cars from the road.

**WATER CONSERVATION=** They collect and reuse water. A four acre on-site retention pond captures rainwater and runoff, filtration technology cleans and recirculates, and computer-monitored drip irrigation conserves.

**LAND USE-** In California, They produce in excess of 24 times the amount of tomatoes as traditional field farming. It would take over 3,000 acres (7,000 acres farm gate) of open fields to match the output of their 125 acres under

*Story continued on last page*

## Recap of February 12 Meeting

The meeting began with Hutch Hutchinson reminding us that the day was Abraham Lincoln's birthday and he read some inspirational quotes from our 16th president. In honor of the upcoming Valentine's Day, songleaders RoseAnn Hill and Staci Johnson asked us to clasp hands and sing "Let Me Call You Sweetheart." Our dear President announced she had baked cookies also for Valentine's Day as our dessert.

Hutch reminded the club that applications for the JGMF grants are due by month's end. Albert McCartney also spoke of the next trip to Nicaragua, if any member is interested in traveling there for our clinic project.

President Irene announced a District 5240 event celebrating 25 years of women in Rotary and 25 years of fighting polio. The event is on Saturday, March 15 in Westlake Village. Ask Irene for more info!

We were fortunate to witness another induction, this time for Mike Montoya, who was sponsored and introduced by Rob vanNieuwburg. Mike had been in Rotary in the Eighties but has decided to rejoin our club.

The Rotary Moment had Mary Kay Doubek speaking joining Rotary because of the example of Rosa Lee Measures and how she conducted herself in life. Mary Kay spoke of how she sees of our club."Everyone is a Rosa Lee." Dave Bianco fined on community colleges.

### Program

Introduced by Mike Anderson, Eric Burton was the speaker: he works for the City of Ventura in the Parks and Recreation Department for 27 years. He is very happy to have made a life here. Eric has two kids and worked for the YMCA before coming to work for the City.

The first item he spoke of was the Corporate Games, an annual event that pits companies against companies. It helps local businesses to invest in their most valuable asset, their employees, by promoting unity and team building, promoting wellness and giving back to the community. The games feature different competitive groups, depending on company size, and features opening and closing ceremonies as well as many 'games.'

Eris also spoke of his other major responsibility,

## Today's Program *Houweling's Tomatoes with Kyle Stephenson*

Introductions:

RosaAnn Hill

Rotary Moment:

Clyde Reynolds

Fining:

Dick Hatcher

managing, for the City, the two public municipal golf courses at Olivas and Buenaventura, which he took over in 2008. Some improvements have been made over the years, including a new management company.



*Mike Anderson, our Program Chair, introduced our guest speaker.*



*Eric Burton, a City of Ventura Parks and Recreation Supervisor, speaks on the Corporate Games.*





*Rob vanNieuwburg introduces Mike Montoya, moments before his induction to the club.*



*Staci Johnson and RoseAnn Hill lead the club in a special Valentine's Day song.*



*Mary Kay Doubek uses her Rotary Moment to acknowledge Rosa Lee Measures as an inspiration.*



*Dave Bianco fined on all things community college.*



*Hutch Hutchinson started the meeting off by remembering President Abraham Lincoln.*



*Terry Schaeffer attempts to answer a tricky fining question.*



## Dinner at the Villa on the Hill

**Help Rotary raise money to end polio and honor Larry Emrich for his lifetime support.**

**When:** Saturday, March 8, 2014 6:00pm to 9:00pm

**Where:** Home of Doug Halter and Randy Encinas

**Tickets:** \$75 - ONLY 100 BEING SOLD!

Music arranged by the Children of the Harmony project.

Dinner served by **Sheriff Geoff Dean, Superintendent Trudy Arriaga, Retired Chief Mike Tracy, Mayor Cheryl Heitmann, and others.**



Mothers bring children to a Rotary booth during a polio Subnational Immunization Day in Uttar Pradesh, India.

### February Birthdays

Lynda Girtsman, Feb 04  
John Hammer, Feb 04  
John J. Johnson, Feb 06  
Cessy Figueroa, Feb 12  
Norbert Tan, Feb 13  
Gary Young, Feb 21  
Albert McCartney, Feb 23  
Chris Brashears, Feb 29

### February Anniversaries

Clyde Reynolds, Feb 07  
Jim Duran, Feb 11  
Warren Lovell, Feb 13

## Houweling's Tomatoes

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glass in Camarillo.



**REDUCED USE OF FOSSIL FUELS-** Heat is collected from refrigeration equipment, solar thermal and irrigation water for use in heating the greenhouses, thereby displacing natural gas.

**RECYCLING-** Over 90% of waste is recycled.



**THEIR LATEST INNOVATION-** Their new 13.2 megawatt heat-and-power cogeneration technology at Camarillo is the first of its kind in the United States to capture traditionally wasted heat, water and CO2 for use within the greenhouse. This technology well exceeds their power needs allowing us to supply electricity to the grid.

For their efforts, Houweling's was awarded the 2011 California Governor's Environmental and Economic Leadership Award (GEELA).

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  | <b>OFFICERS</b>   |   |
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|  | Recording Secretary *   | Christina Rust  |
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|  | Assistant Treasurer *   | Mark Sauer  |
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