



# ROTARY SPOKES

## Rotary Club of Ventura

Est. May 1, 1919

"The Friendliest Club in Rotary"

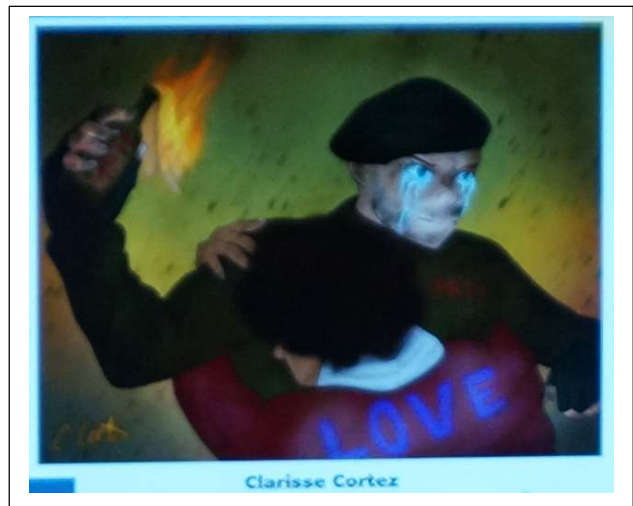
May 21, 2023

### PERSPECTIVES ON PEACE

At our meeting May 17, 2023, we honored the winners of this year's Staci Johnson Ingram Memorial Perspectives on Peace Scholarships. Present were VUSD School Board President Sabrena Rodriguez, Board Vice President Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, Director of Secondary Education Bobbi Powers, and Rotary District Governor Scott Phillips. Local access television CAPS Media and the *Ventura Breeze* were present to cover the event.

This is the only artistic merit scholarship exclusively for VUSD students. Eligible are graduating seniors who will be attending a two-year or four-year advanced or technical school. The theme of the competition is peace, defined as an environment that supports equity and justice for all. Submissions may be in art, photography, video, or music.

We received 25 entries this year. The scholarships are funded primarily by Rotary District grants. The pieces were projected on the monitors, and we watched the winning video entries.



Ken Lendro and Madhu Baja introduced the winners and asked about their educational plans. The winners described their entries and introduced their family members who were present to honor them (a lot were able to join us!). Each winner received a giant check for their scholarship. (I wonder how the bank processes those?)

And the winners are:

1st Prize – Kimberly Fickerson, Foothill Tech – “Peace Like the Rain” (video) (\$5,000)

2nd Prize – Ixzel Nava, Buena – “peace is infinite” (video) (\$2,500)

3rd Prize – Clarisse Cortez, Foothill Tech (artwork) (\$1,500)

4th Prize – Juan Orozco Mendez, Buena (digital artwork) (\$750)

5th Prize – Summer Rose Hayashi, Ventura – “Justice Is Peace” (digital artwork) (\$500)

**PERSPECTIVES ON PEACE (continued)**



Congratulations to this very talented group of students, and to all students pursuing careers in the arts. A big thank you to all who entered, the faculty and family members who support them, and those who judged the contest. For more information, go to [perspectivesonpeace.org](http://perspectivesonpeace.org)

**AWARDS**

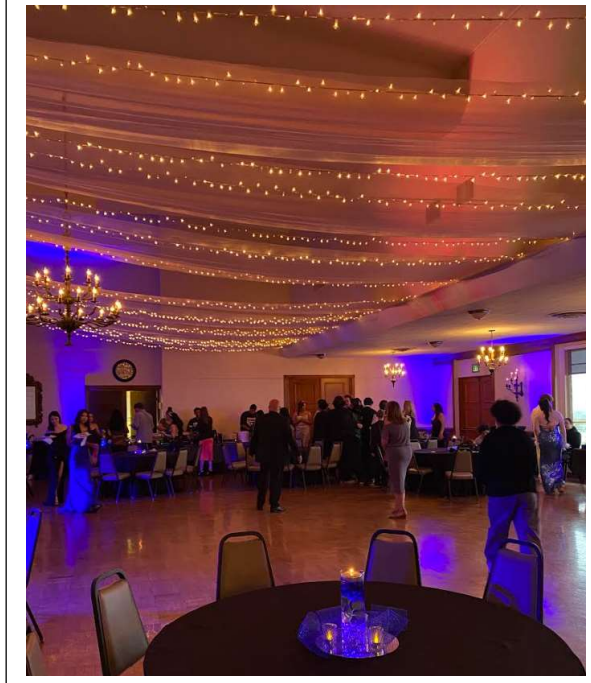


Joslynn Skelton was honored as a Rotary Foundation Endowment Fund benefactor



Brenda Allison -Hutchinson was presented with her Paul Harris plus 5 and 6 pin by her daughter Charlotte

## PACIFIC HIGH SCHOOL PROM



On Friday, May 19, 2023, the Rotary Club of Ventura sponsored the Prom for Pacific High School, which is a model continuation high school of the Ventura Unified School District. About 120 students attended. We were able to keep the ticket price down to \$15. Thanks to Madhu Bajaj for organizing the event, Dan Holmes for photographing the guests, Sandy Lassila for candid photography, Lynda Girtsman for organizing the dessert table, and all who worked and contributed to making this event a success!

## MEETING MAY 17, 2023

**Attendance:** 57 members and guests!

**Lunch:** Chicken piccata, mashed potatoes, green salad, fruit salad, and tapioca pudding.

**Introductions: Joslynn Skelton.** “My mother once said: ‘Hate has four letters, but so does Love. Enemies has seven letters, but so does Friends. Lying has five letters, but so does Truth. Cry has three letters, so does Joy. Negativity has ten letters but so does positivity.’ Life is two sided, choose the better side of it.”

**Songleader: RoseAnn Hill.** “You’re a Grand Old Flag.”

*(continued next page)*

## MEETING MAY 17, 2023 *(continued)*

### Announcements

**Margi Wray** was sorry to report that longtime club member **Larry Dawes died Sunday night**. He did not feel well after last week's meeting and was taken to the hospital by ambulance. He was in intensive care and was able to visit with his grandchildren before his death. He was a very active member of the club since he joined in 2008. Several club members commented on his kindness and generosity. He was a "true Rotarian" and always came through to support club activities. Our sympathies go out to his wife Carol and the rest of his family. We will be provided with information regarding the arrangements.

We were also saddened to learn of the **death of Kelly Mackintosh, wife of club member George Poulakos**. We celebrate the life of those who were part of our Rotary family.

**Ken Leandro:** Every **Interact** club in the city participated in a **Rise Against Hunger** event May 16. Over 60 volunteers packaged 10,000 meals.

**Madhu Bajaj: (1)** Follow-up from the **survey** was sent out in multiple ways. It is also attached to this newsletter.

**(2)** As incoming **Club Service Director**, she is forming a committee to meet two or three times a year to advise on selections for noontime programs.

**(3) Graduation Breakfast** will be June 15 at **Pacific High School**, serving 90 students.

**Brenda Allison-Hutchinson: July 4** is only 7 week away. We need over 100 volunteers...online sign-ups are in progress.

**Lynda Girtsman: Step Down Dinner** is June 20. Sign-up sheets will be circulated at next week's meeting.

**Happy Dollars.**

**Program: Perspectives on Peace.**

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 24 lunch meeting: Salvation Army Eye Clinic Update.** Here is a picture of the MOO (Mobile Optometric Office), being adapted as a mobile clinic.

**May 25: Board meeting,** 12:00-1:30 p.m, Crowne Plaza, Anacapa Room

**May 31: Social instead of meeting,** 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. Location TBA. Includes bingo. Bring the kids.

**June 7 lunch meeting: Connie Young** will present **JGMF grants**.

**June 14 lunch meeting: Janny Franken: Leading with a Coaching Mindset.**

**June 15: Graduation breakfast, Pacific High School,** 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.

**June 20: Margi's Step Down Dinner,** 5:30 to 9:00 p.m., location to be announced.



## CLUB LEADERSHIP RETREAT

On Saturday, May 20, 2023, incoming President Neal Lassila led a retreat of 23 current and incoming board members and committee chairs. It was held at Guthrie Hall on the Ventura College campus. (I've never been there before, but it's a good place for a meeting...tables and chairs, AV projector with large screen, a small kitchen, rest rooms, and a door that locked behind Greg when he went out to make a phone call.)

Attached is a list of incoming officers and directors. There are positions still to be filled, so speak up if you're interested!

We discussed SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). It's important to note that any final decisions will be made by the incoming board. Also, these are just my notes and not anybody's official position. But here are some of the ideas we talked about:

We discussed the flier (attached) that highlights the major themes from the recent club survey:

*Communication:* Explore possibility of Outlook calendar invitations for events. Consider a ClubRunner clinic at a meeting to make sure this resource is available to everyone. Share more information from board meetings and financial information. Publish Who Does What list and a list of open opportunities for committees, projects, etc. Need two additional people to help with external communications and online improvements.

*Engagement:* Consider reinstating a Sunshine Committee or other mechanism to follow up on members who stop attending, to send condolence cards, etc. Make more short-term projects available for those who don't want to commit to being committee chair, etc. Compile a list of people's *passions* (not necessarily their professions) as a resource for projects. Also mentioned the recently added Club Program Committee, led by Madhu, to guide Club Meeting programs and speakers.

*Connection:* Improve opportunities to get to know each other better. Should we have more variety in meeting format, like having some meetings where we socialize rather than having a program? Highlight a couple members each week on the AV monitors before the formal meeting begins?

We discussed ways of retaining members, attracting new members, and increasing diversity. We also discussed how to structure the funding for Interact Clubs...an unrestricted grant for the year, or on a project-by-project basis?

We discussed all the projects we did this year (there were a lot...see attached list) and whether we should replace some of them with more effective programs. For example, there was little participation in the Four-Way-Test essay contest this year...should we replace it, for example, with sponsoring more RYLA spots or increasing Perspectives for Peace scholarships? The Food Share Can Tree comes at a busy time of year and had little participation...perhaps hold our own food drive? Rotarians at Work Day is international...we might consider a project other than through Habitat for Humanity. We have participated in the Backpack and Dictionary projects for years...are these the best ways to support our students? (Lots of strong opinions about how to improve the Dictionary Project!)

We have an exciting year in front us, with lots of energy. Have ideas? Sure you do! Contact Neal, Sandy, or Madhu.

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## **CLUB LEADERSHIP AND BOARD INTRODUCTIONS 2023-2024**

- President – Neal Lassila
- President Elect – Joslynn Skelton
- Secretary – Rob Van Nieuberg
  - Executive Secretary – Patti Birmingham
- Treasurer – Mark Sauer
  - Assistant Treasurer – Dave Wellik
- Communications Director – Mike Schwartz
  - Assisting – Ken Leandro
  - Social Media/Additional Assistance – TBD
  - AV – Chris Brashears, Kellye Patterson, others TBD
- Fundraising Chair – Jessica Brandon
  - Assisting – Lynda Girtsman
  - Others TBD
- Club Services Chair/Director – Madhu Bajaj
  - Prior Board Chair – Sandy Lassila
  - Assistant – TBD
- Membership Services Chair/Director – Abiel Acosta
  - Prior Board Chair – Neal Lassila
  - Assistant – Andrea Contarino
- Community Services Chair/Director – Joslynn Skelton
  - Prior Board Chair – Brenda Allison-Hutchinson
  - Assistant – Danny Quintana
- Youth Services Chair/Director – Ken Leandro
  - Prior Board Chair – Angela Rosales
  - Assistant – Meaghan Smith & Judy Moore
- Vocational Services Chair – Kellye Patterson
  - Prior Board Chair – Hutch Hutchinson
  - Assistant – Greg Wray
- International Services Chair – Anil Aggarwal
  - Prior Board Chair – Dan Holmes
  - Assistant – TBD
- Other Club Leaders:
  - Kristin Taylor
  - Connie Young
  - Irene Henry

Thank you so much for your ideas in the Member Survey. In February, survey results were emailed to members so we can all take action to strengthen our club.



The 23/24 board will be discussing how we can use the **valuable feedback** in the upcoming year.

As you can imagine, we cannot address all of the issues as sometimes we received conflicting feedback. Some ideas we love but cannot undertake due to capacity.

We decided to focus on 3 major themes from the survey that are key for a **strong, vibrant club**.



## LIST OF ROTARY CLUB OF VENTURA PROJECTS, EVENTS, AND ACTIVITIES 2022-23

- Fireworks Show and Family Picnic, includes volunteers from Rotaract and Interact Clubs
- Polio Auction
- Mexico Build w/Rotaract Club
- Eye Clinic Support and Volunteering
- Clothing collection for Westminster Clinic
- Coats for Kids – Included Rotaract and PHS, VHS, and FTTHS Interact Clubs
- Backpack Project w/Lions and all Ventura Rotary Clubs
- Christmas Can Tree
- Westside Christmas Event
- All Interact Clubs – Rise Against Hunger Event
- All Interact Clubs -
- RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Academy) for Interact Clubs
- Pacific High School Interact Club
  - Breakfast & Lunch
  - Fundraiser – Thanksgiving Center Pieces
  - Prom Support
  - Foodshare Field Trip
  - Senior Graduation Breakfast
  - Career Day
- Support for Foothill Interact Club
  - Annual Fundraiser Bake Sale
  - Teacher/Staff Appreciation Cards
  - Food Share Can Tree Project
  - Holiday cards to elderly in care local facilities
  - Tour of RMH Family Room at VCMC
- Support for Ventura High School Interact Club
  - Pancake Breakfast
  - Annual Fundraiser Event - Pumpkins
  - Rise Against Hunger
  - Essential Needs Stocking Pantry
  - Color Run
  - Special Needs Valentines Day Dance
  - Special Needs Spring Picnic
- 4-Way Test Essay Contest
- Ronald McDonald Walk includes Rotaract and PHS, VHS, and FTTHS Interact Clubs
- Tri-Rotary Event Planning (Beachside Bash – coming Sept 2023)
- Tri-Rotary Christmas Meeting
- JGMRF Scholarships (Joe Taylor & Everett Millais)
- JGMRF Grants
- Support of Ventura Rotaract Club
- Habitat for Humanity Project
- Navaho Water Project – Changed to increase funding for the Eye Clinic
- Perspectives on Peace Scholarship – Funded from the Club
- Literacy Project/Dictionary Project