



ROTARY SPOKES

Rotary Club of Ventura

Est. May 1, 1919

“The Friendliest Club in Rotary”

November 19, 2023

CONVERSATIONS IN ROTARY

Our meeting November 15, 2023, featured interviews by Lynda Girtsman of one of our newest members, and a more “seasoned” member.



Rena Sepulveda has been a member since August. She has devoted most of her professional life to housing, particularly for those with mental health issues and other vulnerable populations. She is currently Director of Contracts and Grants for Turning Point Foundation, which provides housing, rehabilitation & recovery programs, and health navigation for those in our community dealing with mental illness. She previously worked at Cabrillo Economic Development

Corporation. Rena is developing her own non-profit, Stairway to Recovery. Rena was born in Santa Paula, attended Poinsettia Elementary School, attended middle school and high school in Santa Paula, and earned her B.A. in Political Science and Sociology at Berkeley. She has two dogs: Jake and Otis.

George Poulakos has been a Rotarian for 10 years and a member of our club for seven. After his wife’s death 6 months ago, he returned from Florida to Ventura. He is our President Elect and will also serve next year as the district’s International Service Chair.



We almost lost George to the Kiwanis Club. He was a member of their Key Club and his grandfather was a Kiwanian. But when George was doing an AIDS documentary in Cape Town he lost a bet to some

Rotarians and had to participate in a charity event with them. He manages a global grant with 21 other clubs to keep young girls in Botswana and Zambia from the sex trade. He has spent a lot of time in Africa and has seen it first-hand what distinguishes Rotary: what we do for the rest of the world. “Rotarians build relationships so people can build their lives.”

MEETING NOVEMBER 15, 2023

Attendance: 29 members and guests attended on this rainy Wednesday. Visiting Rotarian **Mike Dutra** (Westlake Village), who is currently District Interact Chair, and District Governor Nominee. Guests were Kellye Patterson's daughter, and Martine Rodriguez from Chile.

Lunch: Food Affairs by Stacey prepared a delicious honey butter chicken with sweet potatoes, mixed vegetables, and carrot cake for dessert.

Margi Wray called the meeting to order while **President Neal Lassila** attended the Information Technology Task Force in Illinois.

Flag salute/introductions/inspirational message: Kellye Patterson

Song: Clyde Reynolds and Bev Ward: "You're a Grand Old Flag"

Announcements:

Margi Wray: (1) Today is **National Clean Out Your Refrigerator Day**.

(2) Provided an update on **Jessica Brandon's court case with Ella**.

(3) **Rotary Ventura East** is selling **Thanksgiving Pies**.

Madhu Bajaj: (1) Saurabh Bajaj is seeking passionate fundraisers for the **Fireworks Sponsorship Committee**.

(2) **Please RSVP**—yes or no—for the **Holiday Social** (Dec. 1). We need a total meal count.

(3) Reminder that **no meeting next week (Nov. 22)**.

Chris Brashears: Please sign up for **Salvation Army Bellringing** December 9.

Kristin Taylor: (1) **Coats for Kids** is in full swing. We have encountered some potholes, but we fill them up! Unfortunately, Trader Joes is not participating this year. We need 600-700 jackets and coats for the **Westside Holiday Event**—you can bring coats to our **Holiday Social** December 1.

(2) **The Salvation Army Hope Center's** vacuum cleaner died—seeking a donation of a bagless vacuum.

Judy Moore: Seeking volunteers to work at the **Westside Holiday Event** December 16. She will bring a sign-up sheet to the next meeting. See attached flier.

Brenda Allison-Hutchinson: Thanks for your confidence in selecting her as the new **Treasurer**. She acknowledged **Mark Sauer's** work and noted he has been amazing during the transition. Please be patient if your credit card has not been charged yet for Quarter 3 as we are "regrouping."



Irene Henry introduced **Martine Rodriguez**, who was a Rotary Exchange student and attended Ventura High School during his junior year. He thanked those who helped him during that period. He is now a practicing attorney in Chile. He supports Rotary in Chile.



Crista Hermance received her first **Paul Harris** pin and certificate. Crista has been a member since March. The award is based on recognition points from Sheila Fattarelli. **Hutch Hutchinson** reminded us that for every dollar donated to the Rotary Foundation, you receive one point for yourself and one point that can be used to award another person.

Happy Dollars.

Fining: **Barbara Asbell** quizzed us about Veterans Day.

CELEBRATING CLUB ANNIVERSARY
Rene Rickard
3 years

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
Angela Rosales
November 12

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Nov. 22 NO MEETING THIS WEEK



Nov. 29 lunch meeting: Ben Rode and Nancy O'Rode with Ondulando Firewise. Ben and Nancy have lived in Ventura since 1990. Ben is retired after teaching mathematics for 25 years at Moorpark College. Nancy is retired after being an associate professor at CSU Northridge and had the pleasure of teaching people who wanted to become elementary teachers.

They met as Peace Corps Volunteers in the Fiji Islands teaching math to prospective elementary teachers. Before Fiji, Ben was writing mathematics curricula in Thai, as a Peace Corps Volunteer. They have taught in International Schools in Madrid and Nairobi and in private and public schools in California. Ben and Nancy are bird watchers, hikers, tent campers, and enjoy traveling.

Ben and Nancy will discuss the formation of Ondulando Firewise. The Ventura Fire Dept. and the Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council announced Ondulando as the City of Ventura's inaugural nationally recognized Firewise USA community. Firewise USA is a program by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) that acknowledges communities that take proactive measures to minimize wildfire risks through organized collaboration and action. Ondulando's achievement reflects a united effort among its 640 property owners to enhance safety for all residents in Ventura County. They will also provide tips on how we can be more fire safe.

Nov. 30 Board Meeting, Crowne Plaza Hotel, 12:00 to 1:30 p.m.

Dec. 1 Holiday Social for members and their guest. 6:00-9:00 p.m., Bright Spark Brewing, 4561 Market St., Ventura. Dinner will be served. No host bar with delicious beers, wines, and nonalcoholic beverages. If you have allergies or special food needs, please RSVP early so we can make the proper arrangements. We invite you to bring a dessert to share, or participate in the Great Rotarian Bake Off. No children please. RSVP to Madhu Bajaj. See attached fliers.

Dec. 6 lunch meeting: Ventura City Manager Bill Ayub

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.

Holiday Social

Dec. 1
6-9pm

BRIGHT SPARK
BREWING

4561 Market St, Ventura

For Members and their Guest
(Adults Only)

Thank you Jessica Brandon, Andie Contarino,
Kellye Patterson and Monica Smith for
your party planning talents!



BRING A BAKED GOOD

Sign up to bring a baked good to our Holiday party on Dec. 1st. Store bought or homemade are both accepted. Please consider bringing enough for 10 people.

THE GREAT ROTARIAN BAKE OFF

For those who would like to compete we will be hosting the Great Rotarian Bake Off. Your baked goods will be entered into the bake off as well as served for dessert. This is a fun friendly competition. Only those interested in being a part of the bake off will be entered.

Rules as follows:

- Competitors will bring 24 pieces of their dessert.
- Only homemade desserts will be eligible to enter.
- Please do not bring items that will need refrigeration.
- There are no regulation on what type of dessert you can bring. We just ask that it is easy to serve and can be hand held.

A small panel of judges will taste your desserts and awards will be given in the following categories:

- Most Seasonal Flavor
- Best Overall Presentation
- Most Creative





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!



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