



Demotion 2022 Special Shorelines Edition
June 24, 2022

The sad news came in at about noon on the day of our annual demotion – A.J. MAZZARELLA had had a close encounter with someone with Covid, and therefore our Co-President would be forced to isolate and would have to miss his own going away party. Well, actually, since he will be returning as our Co-President for the next year anyway, he wasn't really going to be "going away." And we made arrangements to make a video recording of the event (Video link <https://youtu.be/mqyBRkLcGYE>) so he could eventually see how we roasted and toasted him that evening. And we should all be grateful that A.J. selflessly self-isolated, as per the CDC guidelines, to prevent any possible transmission of that nasty virus to any of the rest of us gathered together. Thank you, A.J.... And we missed you!

It was a beautiful evening at the lush Lacy estate on the hillside at Grandview Street. A gentle breeze and pleasant temperatures kept us comfortable, and the open bar also helped to keep our members and guests in a good mood. Cocktail hour was filled with great conversation, plenty of libations, and (in keeping with the "island theme" of the evening's décor and dress code) delightful appetizers of tropical fruits and vegetarian egg rolls. They were so good that some of us had practically a full meal's worth of those goodies before the official buffet even opened up.



As it turned out, our caterers from Oceanside Kitchen Collaborative had completed their preparations and setup early and, to keep the food from getting cold, we were

able to open up the dinner line well before the expected hour of 6:30 pm. We somehow found room in our appetizer stretched bellies for some delicious teriyaki chicken, kalua pork, Hawaiian mac salad, sticky rice, rolls, and salad. And if that wasn't filling enough, you could walk around to the other side of the house to sample from the abundant assortment of desserts. I can guarantee that no one was left hungry that evening!



Before the meal began, we were welcomed by some real “characters” from Sesame Street – BILL DERN as Kermit the Frog and TOM BRAULT as Cookie Monster, who reminded us that this Rotary “episode” was brought to you by the Number Two (because we had two presidents) and the Letter “J” in tribute to A.J. (**ANTHONY JOHN MAZZARELLA**), L.J. (**LOUIE MANUEL FIMBRES, JUNIOR**) and our incoming “J” Co-President-to-be R.J. (**RENEE JEAN WHITWORTH RICHARDSON WENDEE**). Kermit / BILL sang a snippet of a Sesame Street tune about “booting the J boys on the Rotary Show tonight” and led the pledge to the flag. And Cookie Monster TOM sang our Invocation / Rotary Moment (“R is for Rotary, That good enough for me”) and aggressively munched down a huge peanut butter cookie before inviting each table in sequence to line up to fill their plates. A leisurely dinner then commenced.



After dinner (... and again, significantly earlier than our planned timetable of events), we made a switch from our standard demotion agenda order and distributed our club's annual awards before the skit time. Our Secretary / Past President x 3 / Co-President Elect **RENEE RICHARDSON** started out by thanking our generous hosts, **JANET BLEDSOE LACY** and her husband **STEVE** for opening their home and yard to us, as well as for footing the bill for the open bar

and desserts. (Talk about your “Hostess with the Mostest”!!) Then it was on to the announcement of the awards, which was a remarkably rapid process, since so many of the recipients were not able to be with us for this event. Our New Member Award went (in absentia) to PABLO ACOSTA for all that he does, and has the club doing, with TriCity Food Pantry. The Marty Schroder Award (given to the member who has made our community a better place through involvement in non-Rotarian activities) was announced to go to DAN WILSON, who has done so much with the Afghan refugee resettlements into the region. RENEE mentioned that they would receive their awards at a future meeting, at which point, TOM BRAULT popped up and joked, “Accepting their awards on their behalf...” This got a laugh from the crowd before RENEE added, “TOM, you might as well stay standing”, for he would be receiving the El Toro Award (bestowed upon the member best known for slinging the B.S. at our meetings) for a record shattering *fifth* time. TOM beamed with pride at achieving this accolade again.

Our Co-President who was able to attend, L.J. FIMBRES, was then called forward to accept his parting gift after his year of leadership, which RENEE labeled as “A lively year, with plenty of ups and downs.” When told he was getting a gift, as he walked forward from the back table, L.J. asked with a degree of trepidation in his voice, “Is it ticking??” Turns out that it was not a bomb at all, but a very, very fine and useful gift – a folding camping / beach chair with Oceanside Rotary Club imprinted on the back, complete with cup holders. We can see L.J. kicking back and proudly enjoying this present for years to come! In his remarks of gratitude, he said, “It has been a great year! And I’m looking forward to more to come!”



The “more to come” for this demotion evening was the transition to the humorous skit / roast portion of the party which, because it (like everything else this evening) started earlier than expected, it was slightly challenging to see some of the earlier slides projected in the accompanying PowerPoint. As the sun continued its slide over the horizon, this soon was not a problem, and for the most part, it did not stop the audience from getting the jokes that were on display.

As BILL DERN is so fond of saying whenever he writes up the Shorelines, “You really should attend the meetings” to get the full effect of what happens at our gatherings, and that is especially true of these demotion skits. But we will give you a brief rundown of the topics covered so ably in this event by our troupe of Rotary Players this year (in alphabetical order): JANET BLEDSOE LACY, TOM BRAULT, SHOR DENNY, BILL DERN, ANCHISA FARRANT, DAVE HALL, TERRI HALL, BRIAN LONG, ERNIE MASCITTI, LES NEWQUIST, RENEE RICHARDSON, JIM SCHRODER, and VICKIE PROSSER. (Practically a quorum of the club was involved in these shenanigans!)



We accused our Co-Presidents of shirking on the traditional presidential workload by first dividing the meetings between the two of them, and then canceling half of the normal meetings, going to just two a month instead of every Friday ... We noted that the 20% of the year that we were on Zoom because of Covid concerns had its upsides and its downsides ... We talked about how the current hot topic terms of “Woke”, “Cancel Culture”, and “C.R.T.” mean very different things in Oceanside Rotary. (A.J. “Can’t Remember Things” and L.J. “Couldn’t Realize Tasks” – being our only president who was still a red badger ... since 2018! L.J. was handed a HUGE red badge to call attention to his foot dragging on the simple New Member checklist.)

We had a brief lookback at our “Who the Heck is That?” contest, which proved that A.J. was not the only member who “Can’t Remember Things.” We had seen all of the pictures before and were told the correct answers already, but few folks could recall the identities of JIM SCHRODER, JANET BLEDSOE LACY, RENEE RICHARDSON, and VICKIE PROSSER from their pictures as toddlers.

JIM SCHRODER and ERNIE MASCITTI took on the roles of A.J. and L.J. in a couple of imagined phone calls between our two co-leaders. And SHOR DENNY sang a couple of ditties to sum up the personalities / styles of our two leaders: L.J.

(“I’m just a guy who cain’t say no”) and A.J. (“Perplexed, Befuddled and Bewildered am I”). Then we started our look back on the two things that the AJ/LJ era will be most remembered for: 1) Murphy’s Law (“Everything that *can* go wrong, *will* go wrong”) and 2) L.J. losing his gavel and the adventures that it had during his absence from Rotary.



Murphy’s Law was especially in evidence at our March 11th meeting, when the flagpole fell down in the wind so many times that the eagle completely shattered off of its top ... and A.J. forgot to fine our newly inducted member... and he ALSO forgot to ask us to sing “Happy Birthday” to our celebrating members. Then A.J. had the gall to complain that RENEE had not written “sing the birthday song” into his agenda. An exasperated RENEE then detailed how, over the next few months, she tried to make her agenda even more explicit and idiot proof on that monthly (and, to most people, completely obvious) task.

In a bit of a tangent, we then spent some time talking about how things had gone wrong for RENEE, too, this year with a tech-challenged Club Foundation meeting almost going belly up and her having so many glitches in her memory of dates (and even months) when discussing upcoming events. Her one-time attempt to use a QR code for our weekly updates was mentioned ... and lampooned.

Then, back to the subject – or rather subjects – at hand. Feeling that we had been ragging mostly on A.J. up to this point, we shifted our aim to L.J. instead and focused on the unprecedented gavel grabbings both at his very first, and at his very last meetings of the year. We showed photos showing how A.J. was not really concerned about this lost gavel, because it was not his fault. And we marveled at how JANET had given our lost gavel the new and enchanting identity as “Indiana Gavel”, complete with googly eyes, a scarf, and trademark fedora. Who has ever seen a piece of wood with such personality?

We saw photos of Indy’s visits with so many of our members (including close encounters with a smiling A.J.), but L.J. never sighted his gavel all year. We heard songs about how both A.J. and L.J. felt about the situation (“Margaritaville” and an incredible detailing of Indy’s escapades through photos and a song to the tune of the “Theme to Raiders of the Lost Ark”). And, at the end of that tune, L.J. got the

gavel back once again (... and was warned not to lose it before the passing of the gavel down the line of past presidents later).

On a more positive note, we ran down the list of active service projects the club had participated in during this year: beach cleanups, painting horse stables, helping the Friends of the Library move to a new storage facility, collection drives, housebuilding for the poor in Tecate, manning the Ironman registration tables (and taking some silly photos while there), Rotarians at Work Day cleaning up the cemetery (with some PhotoShop pictures of MELISSA RODRIGUEZ being shocked by some dead Oceanside ancestors coming back above the ground to apply for membership in Rotary), and our participation in the local elementary school fitness drives. L.J. was invited to the stage to give a demonstration of his hula hoop technique. (To the amazement of some, and to the disappointment of some more, he actually was pretty good at it!) Then ANCHISA came up to show off her more unusual hula hoop technique and give a go at jumping rope, too.



We also tooted our own horns for all of the good causes that money from our Oceanside Rotary Club Foundation has put to use in our community and around the world – an impressive \$15,000 in disbursements in just this past year.

VICKIE was interrupted in this litany of projects and payouts by JANET's announcement of Breaking News on the gavel which L.J. had gotten back around Easter and that we had handed back to him earlier that night.... "That wasn't actually Indy!" No, the REAL Indiana Gavel had remained on the lam and continued to be guided around town by helpful Rotarians for even more adventures. He got into some pretty shady situations, but eventually cleaned up his act, even getting the chance to rub elbows (... if he had had any such body parts) with local dignitaries like our District Governor Elect, Oceanside's Mayor, and the Congressman who represents North County.



TOM then described a second trip with Indy back to Disneyland, where he met Buzz Lightyear and a host of figures from It's a Small World. That is when Indy realized that he was actually just a tool ... a toy. Now being made aware of his true identity, he came to realize his true purpose and set off to be reunited with his lord and master L.J. That reunion happened in a most dramatic fashion, with JANET and LES NEWQUIST and BRIAN LONG – in true “Raiders of the Lost Ark” fashion - carrying the “Ark of the Covenant” through the audience up to the stage where L.J. carefully opened up the top and, illuminated by a bright, otherworldly glow emanating from within, he pulled out the real and actual Indiana Gavel, returned to his grasp at last. We then promptly took it away from him, because he was only going to be president for a few minutes more. Rumor has it that we “are in negotiations” about what to do with this famous gavel going forward. (If you have an idea of what should happen to Indy now, forward your comments to: WhoGivesADarn@WTH.org)



After a hearty round of applause for JANET BLEDSOE LACY, who had been the creator, costumer, and chief caretaker of Indiana Gavel for the whole year, and with the skit complete, we turned our attention to the rest of our standard demotion traditions, starting with the official parting words of our outgoing president. L.J. spoke on A.J.'s behalf as he said, “This has been quite a treat! I was not expecting



a year like this. It was quite a challenge and learning experience for both A.J. and me. But I had a blast! And I hope everyone enjoyed the year. I appreciate everyone accepting me and how I do things. A.J. and I are both very grateful for having such a great group.”

Then it was time to hand the real Indy down the line of Past Presidents, who after some confusing shuffling around, arranged themselves in chronological order. It was particularly interesting to watch RENEE RICHARDSON prancing in and out of the line to get into her FOUR different positions as either Past President or Incoming Co-President. It was like a dance! And it was noted that we were not sure, if he had been able to be with us, how the heck A.J. would have been able to pass the gavel to himself!



With that transfer of gavel power complete, it was time to hear the final words of the night, which came from the mouth of our brand new (... well, new for the fourth time) club president (... well, co-president) RENEE RICHARDSON. "We totally appreciate all of you being resistant and able to go with change. It has been difficult, but we have been strong as a Rotary club and a Rotary family." In this next year, with a newer president (A.J.) and a "more seasoned" person (RENEE) sharing the helm, they are hoping that we can "come out stronger and we look forward to many, many events going forward." RENEE then gave us reminders of several of those events on our horizon: the parade the next day, the 3rd of July fireworks party at JIM's place, the first meeting of the year on July 8, a board retreat coming up, our night at the Moonlight on August 26th, a social at DAVE and TERRI HALL's home in September, a Christmas party planned. "We hope that you will continue to enjoy Rotary. Thanks to our fabulous hostess JANET. Thanks to TOM BRAULT for your continued support of our demotion dinners." ... "We are going to be stronger than ever as a Rotary club, and we appreciate your help with everything." And, as we were adjourned for the evening, the crowd was encouraged, on the count of three, to enthusiastically say, "Thank you, A.J.!" for our dear now Co-Past President who could not be with us for the capper to his year.





ROTARIANS OUT AND ABOUT ... And Some Missing the Demotion

This just in from NANCY RUSSIAN:

“Sounds like you had another great demotion dinner meeting scripted by the one and only Tom B! I’m sorry to hear about AJ. We’re really sorry we could not be there, but we did partake in the Hawaiian theme as we were in Maui with our grandchildren - in constant motion - celebrating our granddaughter Cassandra’s 16th birthday and Father’s Day. Check out the incredible macadamia nut pancakes at The Gazebo restaurant We arrived 15 minutes before the restaurant opened at 7:30 AM and waited in line an hour and 40 minutes to get seated. Agreed by all, worth it though.

So sorry we missed your demotion celebration AJ and LJ. “



MIKE WESELOH also was on the road. In his case, seeing some of the scenic sites of the Southwest. Here is how MIKE described the photos of his adventures:

“First 2 photos are from the North Rim of Grand Canyon. Then there’s Hoover Dam and the view to the South after passing thru dam. Indian rock sketches from the Valley of Fire National Park. It is south of I 15 about 40 miles before Mesquite Nevada on the Arizona border. The rock formations are something to see and worth the drive, 1 1/2 - 2 hours. The Valley gets its name for at dusk in the right light the valley appears to look like it is on fire, beautiful pastels, red, orange, pink.”



COMING SOON TO OCEANSIDE ROTARY

July 3 – Fireworks viewing party at PP JIM SCHRODER'S home (4020 Wooster Drive, Oceanside). Potluck dinner starting at 5:30 pm. BYOB

July 8 – First meeting of the new Rotary Year!

July 22 – Regular meeting

July 29 – Regular meeting