

 2025-2026	ROTARY CLUB OF OCEANSIDE SHORELINES			 CO-PRESIDENTS Roger Vanderwerken Paul Wendee
	Tom Brault Editor-in-Chief	Janet Lacy Photographer	Jim Schroder Reporter	

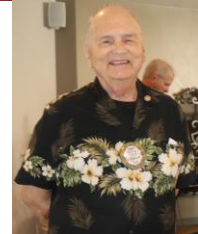
February 27, 2026

CO-PRESIDENT ROGER VANDERWERKEN at precisely 12:30 p.m. looked around the room one time from the podium before warmly greeting one and all: “Welcome to Oceanside Rotary” with a clang of the bell.



The Pledge: Led by LOLA SHERMAN

4 Way Test: PAST PRESIDENT DAVE HALL



ROGER then proceeded to tell all of us, “This is the second meeting in the last month we have lost a member. First Rudy Van Hunnick and now BOB PICKREL.”



BOB PICKREL was a member of the Oceanside Rotary Club for just a few days short of 48 years. BOB was a Bank of America Branch Manager on Mission Avenue in downtown Oceanside for many years before retirement. ROGER asked if anyone would like to say a few words about BOB.

PP TERRI HALL was the first to comment that when she first came to Oceanside and Oceanside Rotary, she worked for an NGO facility which offered FEMA food to those in need. She asked for volunteers to help serve and BOB was the first to come forward to help TERRI.

PP JANET BLEDSOE LACY told us that BOB was the Manager of Bank of America on Mission Avenue in Oceanside. Her Dad used to bank at this branch. He did not like to wear newer shirts and her Mom would periodically write on the back of his older shirts “Old Shirt” in a black marking pen, but that did not stop

Dad from wearing these shirts outside the house. One day her Dad was banking at the Bank of America when BOB noticed him and the shirt which he was wearing with the two words “Old Shirt” scrawled on the back. Guess what he did? BOB noticed it and commented, “Someday I hope to be rich enough to wear a shirt like that!” They both laughed, I am sure.

PP JIM SCHRODER, yours truly, told of the times a number of years ago when BOB used the inside of the Bank of America building to raise funds by hosting a spaghetti dinner at the end of the day for everyone to come in to “PICKERELE’s PALACE” and purchase food for the fundraiser. Several organizations used this facility for making money to go back into the community and his fun “PALACE” nickname stuck.

PP VICKIE PROSSER reminisced that, back in the day, BOB was a regular member of the ROTARY PTA (“Part Time Alcoholics”) who met in the bar for a libation prior to the start of our lunch and meeting.

RENEE RICHARDSON presented the club two checks from PAST PRESIDENT BILL DERN in the amount of \$100 each in memory of BOB and Rudy. The funds will go to the Oceanside Rotary Foundation Endowment Fund.

Then RENEE reminded us that around 1984 or 1985 BOB had proposed the first woman to be inducted into the Oceanside Rotary Club. Yours truly dug into the far back reaches of his mind and remembered the name DEE FLEMING. Thanks to BOB nominating her, she became an active member of our Club until she passed away from cancer a few years later.

ROGER then asked all in the room to honor a Moment of Silence for our friend BOB PICKREL.

SONG: PAST PRESIDENT JAY CRAWFORD led us in “God Bless America” and a song which Jay wrote - “Oceanside.” These are the words to his song.

Oceanside, My Oceanside
With the Hills of Green and Beaches wide
You’ve got the Pier... the Harbor, too
And the Mission Bells ring out for you
Out in the Surf, the Dolphins glide
And Dreams come true in Oceanside



CLUB UPDATES

Friday, March 27 - Iron Man Triathlon – Volunteer at check in (Noon to 5 PM)

Saturday, March 28 – District Training (San Diego)

April 24-26 – Multi District Conference in Chula Vista

Saturday, May 16 – “Epic Day of Service” - Operation Appreciation – Pier Amphitheatre area – Serve food to servicemembers and families

Saturday, May 30 – Goat for Joe Golf Tournament

INTRODUCTION OF VISITING ROTARIANS AND GUESTS

John Crawford (Son of JAY CRAWFORD and a Rotarian from Rancho Bernardo). Years ago, JAY and his first wife had visited Baja California volunteering at an orphanage. When going to Baja they used to stop at a favorite restaurant and discovered that the owner was affiliated with this same orphanage.



Lakeysha Sowunmi – Boy’s and Girl’s Club

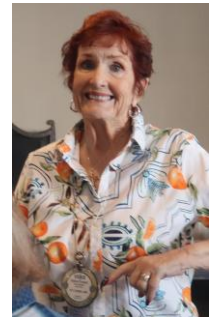
Scott Ashton – Oceanside Chamber of Commerce and today’s speaker

WELCOME SONG PAST PRESIDENT JAY CRAWFORD

TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

PAST PRESIDENT VICKIE PROSSER gave us two truths and a lie and we were to determine which of the three stories was the lie. If you guessed the wrong item you had to give the club \$1.

- 1 - VICKIE was raised in Oceanside, but born in Nebraska
- 2 - At age 5 she played a rendition of “How Much is that Doggy in the Window” on the accordion at the Del Mar Fair
- 3 - Entered the Miss Oceanside Beauty Contest on a dare and won.



The lie was number 3. (VICKIE did enter the contest, but the winner that year was none other than Barbara Mandrell who went on to be a world famous singer.)

A MOVING ROTARY STORY

PAST PRESIDENT RENEE RICHARDSON just returned from the L.A. PELS (President Elects Learning Seminar) to be told once again how to be a Rotary President. This was her 6th time. She could have led the training really.



One of the questions which was asked of all the participants this year was.... “How has Rotary changed my life?”

RENEE wrote and read her answer to the club.

“I was inducted into Rotary in October 1986, at a moment in history when women were finally being welcomed into this incredible organization. I was a single mom, trying to find my foot in a new job, searching for purpose, connection, and a place where I could serve. I longed for something bigger than myself—something that would anchor me and lift me at the same time.

I turned to a former boss who was a Rotarian and asked if he would sponsor me. He agreed but warned me gently to keep a low profile in the beginning. He anticipated resistance. Uncertainty. Maybe even criticism. But even with that caution, I felt something calling me forward. And so, with equal parts courage and hope, I stepped into Rotary.

From that moment I was inducted into the Oceanside Rotary Club, everything changed. Rotary didn't just open doors—it opened my heart. It gave me community, purpose, and people who believed in me long before I fully believed in myself. I found mentors, friends, and eventually family within this organization.

Through Rotary, I have traveled the world and visited countless clubs, each one reminding me that service has no borders. I have built lifelong friendships, shared countless moments of joy and discovered that giving is one of the most powerful forces for healing and connection.

Rotary has shaped who I am today. It has taught me that love is expressed in service, compassion is shown through action, and family is something we build through shared purpose. Rotary isn't something I simply belong to—it is something I live every day.

I am forever grateful to the organization that lifted me up, embraced me, and changed the course of my life. Rotary truly gave me a place to grow, to give, and to become the person I was meant to be."

PRESENTING A BIG CHECK

Our guest speaker Scott Ashton was called up early for a ceremonial handoff of an oversized check showing our Club's \$1,000 contribution to the Chamber's Rising Star Scholarship for this year. (Scott will tell us much more about this scholarship program during his presentation.)



HAPPY \$\$

\$20 ROGER VANDERWERKEN Is happy to announce the birth of his second grandchild Phoebe. It is a name out of the bible. He challenged us that if anyone in the room (except for ordained minister DARREL LARSON) was able to tell the tale of the biblical Phoebe he would donate \$50. I tried but did not give enough information correctly to satisfy him. But after no one else offered a guess, Rev. DARREL was able to come close by describing her as a Deacon of the church near Corinth. ROGER expanded a bit more on Phoebe's story: She was the trusted courier who delivered Paul's letter to the Romans. (I looked it up.)



\$20 ROGER then gave another amount for DARREL coming close.

\$5 JAY was happy and sad to say that his wife Anita is home from Kauai after flying over to see her older brother. The sad part is that he died from cancer several days after she arrived to see him.



\$10 MIKE CURTIN Happy \$5 to be back among the healthy again after tendons snapping and broken bones and other health problems had kept him away from many, many meetings. He also was \$5 Happy for knowing BOB PICKREL all these many years.



\$20 PP TERRI HALL Happy Dollars because her and DAVE's daughter Julie loved going to Seaside Singers concerts, especially when DAVE had a solo. Julie wanted to be able to really hear and appreciate his vocal talent. Since she has connections in the music industry, she helped cut a CD with a selection of PP DAVE HALL's solos. TERRI invited Rotarians and significant others to the CD Release Party at their home:

Date: March 21, 2026

Time: 1 – 4:00 pm

Place: 4285 Sunnyhill Dr., Carlsbad
Light appetizers and drinks served!
Come celebrate this amazing Mathematician/Artist with us!
Please RSVP: theresemhall@msn.com by Monday March 16th
Home 760-730-3926
Cell 760-604-8664



\$9 PP TOM BRAULT *Surprise...* TOM is in the musical INTO THE WOODS at Palomar College March 6 - 15 and passed around a “sneak peek” photo of himself in costume for his role, explaining why he has let his beard go so bushy lately. (If you would like to see TOM perform, tickets can be purchased online at:

<https://www.palomar.edu/palomarperforms/>)



\$40 ERNIE MASCITTI Joining Rotary was his first experience in Community Service. Growing up he had never had the opportunity. He wanted to model himself after someone he admired. He found that person in BOB PICKREL. After being in Rotary 5 years, he went to BOB and told him that he considered him to be his mentor. BOB was humbled and touched by this. He will be missed by many of us for sure.

\$100 JANET BLEDSOE LACY At a recent Rotary meeting, the newest honorary member had received a Rotary hat. JANET had felt let down after being a Rotarian all these years and never having a Rotary hat of her own. RENEE presented JANET with her very own Rotary visor. She was a Happy Camper!



PROGRAM



DAVID NYDEGGER introduced our speaker Scott Ashton. DAVID had been the CEO of the San Clemente Chamber of Commerce and in 1988 came to Oceanside to become the CEO here. Scott joined DAVID in 1996 and never left. In November of 2016, Scott Ashton took over as CEO of the Oceanside Chamber of Commerce.

For more than 30 years, Scott has had the honor of working with Oceanside's business and community leaders. "It has been an amazing privilege for me to see our City grow into what it is today. As I take on this new challenge of leading the Chamber, I am excited for what we can accomplish in the coming years."

The business community is passionate about Oceanside. It is made up of people who are willing to give their time, energy, and finances in order to help make Oceanside all that it can be. These businesses are vital to the well-being of our community, and it is the Chamber's goal to provide support in any way possible.

For over 130 years, the Oceanside Chamber has served the local business community by providing programs and services to help businesses succeed. The Chamber is aware that the needs of the businesses are continually evolving.

For the first time, the Chamber has moved out of the downtown area to a new headquarters located at 3605 Ocean Ranch Blvd near the shopping center with Felix Barbecue and the Marriot Residence Inn and just east of the Corazon area off of Rancho Del Oro and the Frontwave Arena.



The Oceanside Chamber began in 1896. Today, as the largest and longest-serving business advocate in the area, they represent, support, and promote all things Oceanside. They work with local businesses and nearby Camp Pendleton, teaming up with other Chambers to keep North County thriving. The mission? To champion pro-business policies, boost economic growth, and ensure our community has the skilled workforce it needs to succeed!

The Chamber of Commerce serves the interests of the overall business community by offering programs, outreach, representation, training, education, networking, and support to business and the community of Oceanside.

The Oceanside Chamber of Commerce is committed to the development of leaders to serve in a wide variety of capacities in our community. The Oceanside Leadership Academy was formed to equip participants to serve in a variety of leadership roles such as non-profit boards, City commissions, elected leadership roles, and within leadership succession roles in their own companies.

The Academy objectives are:

- For participants to accelerate the professional growth of all attendees through individual leadership development, building new skills to lead, and learning how to drive change.
- To prepare emerging leaders to take on new roles and responsibilities with current or future organizations.
- To develop a group of emerging leaders with the skills and understanding of how to improve government and private sectors through performance and economic development.

Since 2021, over 200 have graduated from the Leadership Academy. Many in the program have come from within the City of Oceanside offices. Groups are typically 27 to 30 members. They hold two Academy sessions every year: Each includes a half day panel of community leaders with 9 follow up sessions. Areas of interest have been Leadership for STEM (at Genentech), Health care (at TriCity Medical Center), Tourism & Hospitality, Public Safety.

Another great Chamber project is the **Rising Star Program** which runs from September to March and honors high school seniors who demonstrate exceptional character, leadership, and perseverance—often overcoming significant adversity on their path to success. Each month during the academic year, we recognize students from Oceanside’s high schools who embody strong values, uplift their peers, and serve as role models within their school communities. The monthly breakfast events provide a meaningful platform for these students to share their stories of courage and resilience. All students recognized at these breakfasts are invited to apply for Rising Star scholarships.

Launched in 2021, the scholarship program has become a cornerstone of the Chamber’s commitment to youth development and educational opportunity. Through the generosity of business and community partners—including key supporters such as Genentech—the Oceanside Chamber Foundation has awarded **nearly \$150,000 in scholarships to more than 80 students** pursuing higher education or career-training pathways.

Rising Star celebrations strengthen the bond between families, educators, civic leaders, and local businesses while helping nurture the next generation of leaders for a thriving and united Oceanside.

Each month at the Wagner Center in the Corazon area a student is selected to tell a life story of themselves and be honored in front of community leaders. At the end of the school year in April, all of the 35 students in the program are recognized at a breakfast. Over \$50,000 in scholarships were given out to last year's program participants.

Another great program is the Operation Appreciation. This year the date is Saturday May 16th at the Seau Beach Community Center, the bandshell, and at Betty's lot. It is a full day of entertainment and fun for military and their families. Young Military personnel are bused in from outlying areas of the base.

On June 13th the Chamber will host a Golf Tournament at El Camino Country Club to raise funds for the Rising Star Scholarship program.

Scheduled for June 27th, the Chamber has been selected to be a leader in the celebration in the North County for the 250th Anniversary of the United States. Supervisor Jim Desmond asked Scott and the Oceanside Chamber to put this together. This event will be funded primarily through a Community Enhancement Grant. Following the annual Independence Day Parade (which will travel up Coast Highway from Wisconsin Street to Civic Center Drive, starting at 10 a.m), at the parade's end everyone is to head down to the bandshell, Junior Seau Center and Betty's Lot for a day of food, music and entertainment, and a huge fun zone celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the United States. Watch for details of this day in the coming months. You do not want to miss this!

A few questions for Scott after his presentation:

PP VICKIE PROSSER asked for a list of the 6 high schools included in the Rising Star Program. Two are private charter schools.

PP JIM SCHRODER Having been a Chamber of Commerce President in 1991, JIM complimented the work that DAVID NYDEGGER did during his years at the Chamber, and now offered Congratulations to Scott Ashton for the new heights the Chamber is reaching.

As our Club's thanks to our speaker, ANCHISA FARRANT presented to Scott Ashton a planter containing beautiful "String of Hearts" succulents for his new office.



OPPORTUNITY DRAWING(s)

There were TWO tickets drawn as winners today. The first prize up for grabs was a certificate for two to enjoy the Rotary Creates Magic fundraiser the next day in Carlsbad. (These tickets had been donated by DAVE and TERRI HALL.) Guest John Crawford was excited to have his number called.



Then, for a chance at the big jackpot, DARREL LARSON held the winning ticket. Unfortunately, with only 8 cards left to choose from, he drew the card which was right *next to* the joker. (So close, but not close enough.) And so, the elusive jackpot of \$1,000 still is waiting for a lucky winner.

Before sending us off into the warm Friday afternoon, ROGER reminded us to leave a tip for our server and also ran down a list of the programs and events coming up in March.

COMING SOON TO OCEANSIDE ROTARY

Friday, March 13 – Regular Meeting - El Camino Country Club – Speaker: LESLEE GAUL, Visit Oceanside

Friday March 27 – (Regular Meeting Dark) - Iron Man Service Project - Noon to 5 PM – Jr. Seau Community Center by the Pier - Volunteer for registration

Saturday, March 28 – District Training (San Diego) – 8:00 AM – noon

April 24-26 – Multi-District Conference – Chula Vista

Saturday, May 16 – “Epic Day of Service” - Operation Appreciation – volunteer to serve food to servicemembers and their families

Saturday, May 30 – Goat for Joe Golf Tournament – volunteer to help run this annual fundraiser

Friday, May 22 – Regular Meeting Dark for Memorial Day