



*June 28, 2024*  
*Special Year End Dinner Edition*

You could tell it was a special night for Oceanside Rotary right when you entered the room in the country club. The buffet had classy labels on display beside each of the warming trays, letting us know that dinner would be highlighted by Champagne Chicken, juicy and flavorful slices of Tri Tip, with Apple Cobbler to look forward to for dessert. There were fancier tablecloths than we are used to seeing along with multiple miniature lanterns to light up each table. And on each table, there was a placard chock full of information and statistics about the year 1924: Hit movies from that year; the most popular names and fashions of that period; the price of a new house, a new car, and gasoline (... Hard to believe that a gallon of jalopy juice was ever sold for just 21 cents!); etc. And lots of members came dressed up in period clothes. For instance, there were classic flappers like CARRIE CHACON in a shimmering, sparkly dress, TERRI HALL ostentatiously waving her cigarette holder to punctuate her conversations, RENEE RICHARDSON with a fringed frock and cute feather adornment capping her head, and JANET BLEDSOE LACY all aglow in blue sequins and sporting a contrasting fluorescent pink and black feather boa that was to die for. Dapper dudes like ROGER VANDERWERKEN in a pinstriped suit, PAUL WENDEE with his stylish white tie, and TOM BRAULT in his timeless black tuxedo, and Mobster DAVE HALL, complete with fedora and cigar. Yes, some folks took the theme of the night to heart, for tonight we would be winding the clock back to 1924 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Oceanside Rotary.



After the cocktail hour closed, PAUL WENDEE was tasked to lead us in the Pledge, and RENEE RICHARDSON invited the other incoming Co-President JANET BLEDSOE LACY to lead us in reciting the Four Way Test.

We were introduced to our visitors and guests. ERNIE MASCITTI had his wife NANCY at his side. Perennial guest RUDY VAN HUNNICK was also at that front table. At VICKIE PROSSER's back table sat her husband LLOYD, her former "work husband" JACK FELLER and his lovely actual wife BUNNY. Also sharing that table were WENDY VASQUEZANZUA and her husband MIKE. LES NEWQUIST introduced "another Leslie" – his wife who more typically goes by the nickname of "CRICKET." DAVE NYDEGGER showed off "the main person is his life" MARTA HALL. LARRY HATTER spotlighted his wife CATHIE. CARRIE CHACON started her table off by introducing her husband ARMANDO and Past President DEAN ANDERSEN introduced himself as well as his lovely wife CAROL. LYN CORDER had her grandson (and "Paul Harris Fellow as an 8 or 9 year old") AIDAN MULDOON. PAUL WENDEE had the honor of introducing some of our special guests at the other front table: From Mexico, Rotarian DAVID CASH, as well as residents of Mexico but Rotarians from the San Diego Coastal Club here in the USA: CARLOS CARRILLO and FERNANDA TORRES. Last but not least, the Mayor of Oceanside ESTHER SANCHEZ. Our Welcome Song was led by TOM BRAULT.



## A SPECIAL PRESENTATION TO THE CLUB

Mayor SANCHEZ came forward to the microphone to pay tribute to Oceanside Rotary, regretting that back when she was considering joining our club, she did not have enough time available in her work lunch breaks to allow her to attend our meetings. She has always been impressed by the caliber of the people in the club and all of the projects we have been involved in. “You are amazing! You touch so many lives.” She then read to us the Certificate of Excellence which she presented to us on behalf of the City of Oceanside in recognition of 100 years of service to the community.



*“On behalf of the City of Oceanside, congratulations to the Oceanside Rotary Club on your 100th anniversary. Your commitment to service and making a positive impact in your community is truly admirable. Over the past 100 years, your members have worked tirelessly to support local initiatives. You make our City a better place to live. Your dedication and hard work have not gone unnoticed, and your members have touched countless lives. Thank you for your ‘Service Above Self.’”*

At the end of Mayor SANCHEZ’s touching remarks, it was time for dinner and we were guided, table by table, to the bounteous buffet for some good food with a side of great table conversations.

8 o’clock was the kickoff of the evening’s skit. The first narrator, DAVE HALL, really commanded the attention of the room as he played up his mobster character “Deadly Davey” who snarled into the microphone – “Yaaah. See here. This here is time to get this show started, see? So everybody’s sit down, shut your traps, and get ready for the fun” – or something words to that effect... Instead of our normal annual tribute / roast to an outgoing president, the focus of this special evening would be a look back at Oceanside Rotary over its first century. Both the PowerPoint and the verbal review were broken up into brief segments on each decade, from the 1920’s all the way up to today. DAVE started by giving us a brief description of the first ever Rotary club (in Chicago in 1905) and that groundbreaking club’s first ever community service project (the construction of a public toilet in the Windy City’s downtown). DAVE did warn us in advance that, since reliable records from the club’s early years were few and far between, he could not guarantee that not everything reported in this skit would actually be factual, and it would be our job to try to figure out which items were real and what was “fake news.”



TERRI HALL took over to talk about the roaring start of Oceanside Rotary in the Roaring 20's, with supposed visual proof that our very first club president was the first to misplace his gavel – the start of our longstanding club tradition of teasing our leader by trying to nab the symbol of power from our president. The second president had the local blacksmith at the time (a fellow member) to forge a sturdy handcuff and chain device to keep HIS gavel securely in his possession. Since with this device in place the gavel could not be grabbed, the pranksters in the club instead stole the KEY to the handcuff and our poor president number two was pictured having to wear his gavel 24/7 for months while at home, while eating, while bathing, and at his day job as the local undertaker, putting the attached gavel to good use pounding nails into coffins.



**“Oh,  
My!”**

The 1930's, as we know, was dominated by the Great Depression, and Oceanside Rotary held monthly food and clothing drives for the needy. This would include an 11-year-old JOHN STEIGER, who was portrayed by ERNIE MASCITTI, with worn gloves, a scarf and cap, bowl in hand, pleading a la Oliver Twist, “Please sir. May I have some more?”



The 1940's, in ramping up for WWII, saw the development of Camp Pendleton just north of Oceanside. ROGER VANDERWERKEN told a story about a prank pulled on a dear former member HAROLD CARPENTER in which fellow Rotarians who were on the base planning committee created a fake map which made HAROLD think that his family's property was going to be bought by the government for a hefty price. Once he learned that the map was a joke, he declared, “That land is nothing but JUNK” and later built his auto salvage / junkyard on that property.

ROGER continued on with some real stories about real pranks pulled by Harold over the years: slipping forks into Rotarians' pockets at our meetings to make them look like kleptomaniacs; moving all of the furniture out and putting a “For Sale / SOLD” sign on the Rotary president GORDON TAIT's house when the family was on vacation; and the ultimate trickery was replacing President PHIL FRANKLIN's prized Ford Fairlane in the Rotary parking lot with a crushed car of the same make and model.



Phil Franklin's Ford Fairlane??



TOM BRAULT recalled how BEN WESELOH was fond of standing up on the chair at our meetings to brag about the always “record breaking” sales at Weseloh Chevrolet, plus stories of JANET BLEDSOE LACY and Father MICHEL GAGNON boasting about accomplishments at their jobs.

JANET herself took over the narration to talk about Rotary in the 1950’s when the only way that women could be involved at all was to be a “Rotary Ann”. This was a term used to describe the wives of members in the still “Men Only” organization. VICKIE PROSSER, complete with pearls, played the part of Rotary Ann “June Cleaver.”



The 1960’s was described by RENEE RICHARDSON as a decade when Oceanside Rotarians played a big part in the planning and design of the Oceanside Harbor development. We saw a graphic of one proposed layout of the slips and docks which was rejected as being beautiful, but way too costly and inefficient to actually build.



Since we actually have some current members who joined in the 1970’s the microphone was turned over to them for “two minutes apiece” (HA!) to share some memories of Oceanside Rotary back in those days. LARRY HATTER told of his first visit to the club in 1961 when the principal of Oceanside High brought him to a meeting when he was the school’s Boys’ Vice

President. He then recalled prominent members and memorable speakers at our meetings and spoke fondly of the “Poets Corner” group which would make up a rhyme about each visitor or guest at a meeting. BOB PICKREL reminded us that back then, Rotary was more exclusive, with only one representative from a given profession allowed to join. Folks were lined up, waiting to become a member! And with the attendance requirements, to



keep up one’s active status, members went around to “make up” at other clubs and thereby met more Rotarians throughout the region. JIM SCHRODER had a unique



perspective on this club, since he has served at the meetings as a busboy for years and therefore “knew who was a cheap tipper!” in the club. He confessed to getting back at some of them years later at a district meeting at the Hotel Del where he got keys to their rooms and shortsheeted their beds. And he shared the

history of our club's shoe for collecting money and told us about some of the key service projects the club has done over the years.

RENEE had a few example poems to read from the Poets Corner archives and also mentioned the "P.T.A. – Part Time Alcoholics" - members who would religiously meet for libations and chatter before the meetings, as well as Dr. KEITH WHERLEY's recurring "Sports Reports" when the good doctor would make up tales of other members' outlandish athletic achievements in ridiculous and hilarious good fun.

VICKIE PROSSER took over to tell of the 1980's Supreme Court decision which dictated that women should finally be allowed to become full-fledged Rotarians, and the 1990's when the club finally installed its first female president – RENEE RICHARDSON. Believe it or not, TOM BRAULT has been providing the skits for our annual dinners ever since the end of RENEE's first stint as president in 1995, and he sang for us one of the Elvis parody tunes that he crooned as a part of GARY ERNST's demotion back in 1997.

TOM then took over the narration to talk about the musical 2000's for Oceanside Rotary, when, under the guidance of TOM MORROW we started up the Gershwin Music Festival and also donated thousands of dollars' worth of musical instruments to Oceanside schools. That also was the decade of "Let's Do Lunch" where we would occasionally hold away meetings at the business establishments of some of the members, most memorably in the visit to the Main Attraction topless bar. (And that story is NOT fake news.)



THOMASINA JACKSON shared examples of some of the many painting and refurbishment projects that the club worked on in the 2010's and beyond, suggesting that, instead of the Rotary International motto of "Service Above Self", our club motto might as well be "Have Brushes, Will Serve." And the colorful rainbow and golden "Sherwin Williams Award" brush was shown and will be sent on to Past President CHUCK WARD who infamously got more paint on his Rotarians at Work shirt that he ever did on any wall at any of our projects.



TOM BRAULT returned to the microphone to invite the audience to shout out other memorable Oceanside Rotary service projects over the years, and an

impressive list of community and international efforts were recalled and celebrated. TOM opined that Oceanside Rotary could be summed up in just five words: “Great people doing good works”, with the added note of “... and having a good time doing them.”

Now, finally reaching the 2020’s in our Rotary recap, TOM reminded us, “We are not done yet! ... Our history as a club is still being made, day by day and project by project, and we are the ones here at this particular time and in this place who have the honor to continue to make that proud history together.” And to this sentiment, we wrapped up our skit with a rousing standing ovation followed by a snippet of a slightly reworded song (to the tune of “You’ve Got a Friend”) to honor our incoming presidents JANET and PAUL.

## **A GIFT, OUR ANNUAL AWARDS, THE GAVEL PASS, AND FINAL REMARKS**



Guest DAVID CASH from the Tijuana Rotary told us how very appreciative his club is of our Oceanside Rotary’s participation in and contributions to their recent water filter distribution project. (The \$300 we collected to the cause at one of our meetings will buy rice and beans to be used as an incentive for the local filter recipients to follow up by turning in their post project surveys.) As a thank you to the club, he had brought a special bottle of wine to commemorate our 100 years for our new leader to savor, but he was not aware that we had Co-Presidents coming in. (I guess that he left it up to the two of them to decide how they will award or split or share the vino.)

RENEE then proceeded to pass out our annual awards, as is our year end tradition. Unfortunately, our “El Toro Award” winner for 2023-24 was not present at this event, which made people wonder and make guesses, “Who do you think it could be??” We will have to just wait to find out later and keep wondering about the identity of this Mystery Jokester until it gets revealed.

The New Member Award was presented to THOMNASINA JACKSON who had jumped right in during her first year in the club, serving as an ever-smiling greeter, a constant volunteer at club events and projects, a member of the board of directors and our new Membership Chair. Congratulations on an award so well deserved, THOMASINA!





The Marty Schroder Award, given to the member who demonstrates exemplary community service beyond the circle of Rotary, was given, as RENEE described it, to a member whose “dedication to community and to Rotary is phenomenal!” When his name was announced as the winner, ROGER VANDERWERKEN seemed to be very genuinely surprised and touched!



Before she handed the microphone (... and their new gavels) off to our incoming presidents, RENEE took the time to acknowledge a few other special members. First, to TOM BRAULT for once again writing and directing and being the projectionist for this night’s skit, as well as for his continuing service as the Managing Editor for the Shorelines. RENEE told us of the many times when other Rotarians (and even just some random folks who check out our club’s website) would tell her positive reviews and comments on the quality of our club’s newsletters. Then RENEE asked everyone who is involved in the production of the Shorelines to raise their hands and be recognized and applauded for their ongoing service to the club. And last, but not least, we recognized and thanked MIKE CURTIN for so diligently serving the club in the usually thankless job of meeting setup and teardown.

And with those comments completed, the time came to pass the gavel(s) down the line of past presidents, in the order of their service to the club – starting with our most senior PP JIM SCHRODER, going one by one (but with RENEE popping into four different positions in the line and TERRI showing up twice in the lineup, too) all the way down to our incoming newbies – PAUL WENDEE and JANET BLEDSOE LACY.





But before they were given the podium to share their first thoughts as our newly installed co-presidents, RENEE had one other special gift to give first. As she noted, "PAUL suffers from O.C.S. – 'Only Child Syndrome'." Given that background, it was not surprising to hear that PAUL had been quite jealous that she had purchased a gift for JANET at the PETS seminar but had nothing for him. Well, she made note of his chagrin and bought and brought a present for PAUL tonight. After seeing him standing and watching and directing (without actually really working) at so many Rotary work projects, she decided that he deserved to have a special T-shirt made up which proudly labels him as an official "Rotary Supervisor." PAUL could do nothing but smile and nod at this "honor."

Given that it was already just a hair past 9 pm (which is normally the witching hour for Rotary events), JANET's inaugural remarks as an incoming leader were short and sweet. "It is a real honor to be asked to serve. This should be a wonderful, challenging, and interesting year ahead." She then admitted that "It should be no surprise for you to hear that you are going to be led by a left-wing feminist." Then she passed the verbal baton to PAUL who took over the microphone to say that he could be called "a right-wing feminist, I guess."

PAUL then shared an ancient Chinese proverb which is right in line with the philosophy of being a Rotarian:

*If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap.  
If you want happiness for a day, go fishing.  
If you want happiness for a month, get married.  
If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune.  
If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody else.*

One of the goals of the WENDEE / BLEDSOE LACY era in our club is to offer "something meaningful for everyone" by being a part of Oceanside Rotary. By making serving through the club meaningful and personally fulfilling, it will be easier for us to recruit and retain members interested in service. Some specific plans for the year ahead include expanding our international focus through continuing our partnership projects with the clubs we have forged connections with down in Mexico. And PAUL is also excited about the potential for the "Launch Oceanside" program which he had described in his recent presentation to the club in which we would set up a program (based on a pre-existing model) to help entrepreneurs as they start up new business ventures in our town. He, like JANET had in her remarks, also thanked the club for the honor of presiding over this fine club, and he assured us that he will be "under the watchful eye of our Assistant

Governor, four-time past president, 30-year plus club secretary, our ‘resident Gunny Sgt.’”, who happens to be his wife RENEE.

With that promise, there was not much left to say on this historic evening besides the two words that JANET added right before the two of them joined together with their two new gavels for a double gavel clang to end the festivities: “Drive safely!”



## COMING TOGETHER FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY

The Rotary Clubs of North County jointly participated in Oceanside's Independence Day parade on Saturday, June 28th.

Members from Oceanside, El Camino, Carlsbad Hi Noon, Carlsbad Evening, and San Diego Coastal Rotary organized its first-ever Rotary Clubs of North County Independence Day Parade entry. Friends and Rotarians, 20 strong spent the morning decorating the tow truck, which was donated by NK Towing of Oceanside.

Pacific Coast Highway was lined with spectators donning Red, White, and Blue to cheer us on!

Everyone involved agreed that it was time well spent and plans are already underway for a repeat appearance in the parade next year!





## COMING SOON TO OCEANSIDE ROTARY

Friday, July 12: Noon at El Camino Country Club - The first meeting of the new Rotary year with PAUL and JANET officially at the helm will be a Club Assembly.

Friday, July 19: Board meeting on Zoom at noon

Friday, July 26: Noon at El Camino Country Club - Regular meeting. Program = Rotarian David Cash from District 4100 who will present his work in Tijuana, Mexico, entitled "English Reading Lab."