



2024-2025

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ROTARY CLUB OF OCEANSIDE

SHORELINES



CO-PRESIDENTS
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Paul Wendee

May 30, 2025

12:30 Co-President PAUL WENDEE opened our gathering with a resounding gong on the Rotary Bell.

BOB PICKREL led us in the pledge of allegiance, DAVE NYDEGGER in the 4-Way Test, and VICKIE PROSSER inspired us by leading beautiful renditions of “God Bless America,” and “Smile.”



AG RENEE RICHARDSON attempted to offer club updates, but RUDY VAN HUNNICK was so excited about the arrival of today’s speaker, Oceanside Police Chief Taurino Valdovinos, that he staged his own personal meet and greet, stealing focus. Once Madam Assistant Governor had regained control of the meeting, she offered the following info:

Tomorrow, May 31st – Board Retreat Brunch and Meeting 9:00 to Noon – RENEE’s Place

Thursday, June 5th – RENEE and PAUL will attend a “Blind Dinner” at the Rotary club in Tijuana. The dinner is actually a fundraiser for the blind, sponsored by the local Rotaract Club. Participants will be blindfolded as they eat their meals, in order to experience the limitations faced by those unable to see. PAUL and RENEE had just returned from a similar fundraising event at the same club where 400 people participated in a fundraiser to purchase hearing aids. The highlight of that event was when an 11-year-old boy was presented with a hearing aid and was able to hear his mother’s voice for the first time.

Saturday, June 7th – District Governor’s Dinner – PAUL and ROGER VANDERWERKEN will be installed as Co-Presidents, and RENEE as Assistant Governor at this gathering.

Friday, June 13th – Regular Meeting – RYLA Presentation. Students who participated in the recent RYLA event will be present and will talk about this lifechanging experience.

Friday, June 20th – June 26th – PAUL and RENEE to attend the RI Convention in Calgary

Friday, June 27th – Demotion Dinner 5:30 p.m. at the El Camino Country Club – Cost is \$50 per person. A signup list was passed around

Saturday, June 28th – Independence Day Parade 9:00 AM. Members from clubs from all over the area will be participating.

Friday, July 11th – Rotary Round Up – Summer Social 6:00 p.m. at JIM SCHRODER’s house.

Introduction of Visiting Rotarians and Guests: RENEE introduced our perennial guest RUDY. A resounding rendition of the welcome song was led by VICKIE.

Co-President PAUL then came to the podium and reminded club members that club dues will be emailed out via the ClubRunner email on June 1st. Please look for them. Dues are due by July 1, 2025.

PAUL also updated us on “Launch Oceanside” – our new program designed to assist budding entrepreneurs. There are several participants in the Tuesday evening ZOOM gatherings, include one 11th grader from Oceanside High School. MICHAEL JENKINS has been a great help to PAUL in this endeavor. The class has three more weeks to go. PAUL hopes that there might be some members of our club who will step up to serve as mentors once the class is complete.

HAPPY \$\$\$\$



RUDY was \$150 happy simply to be alive at 95 and present at today’s meeting.

ED PARISH was \$5 happy.



JIM SCHRODER was \$20 happy (his money was earmarked for the Oceanside Rotary Club Foundation) to be going on a trip to Dubrovnic, Croatia, and then England. JIM had been in Dubrovnic once before, in 1973, when it was a major city in the former nation of Yugoslavia, under the iron-fisted rule of Marshall Tito. At that time, JIM was arrested as a spy and deported. (Better luck this time



around, dear friend!). His follow-on trip to England involves a surprise visit to an old friend. JAY CRAWFORD was happy to celebrate his 22nd wedding anniversary to Anita, having been hitched in May 2003.

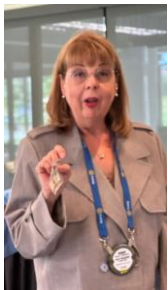


MIKE CURTIN was \$10 happy because 13 years ago he and LARRY HATTER had a conversation with a very junior police sergeant named Taurino Valdovinos about how our club could best impact the city of Oceanside. At the time, the man who would eventually become our new police chief suggested that we should work with young people in the Crown Heights area of our city. For the past 13 years that has been a major focus of our charitable outreach. Having Police Chief Valdovinos as today's guest speaker brings us full circle. MIKE also mentioned that at last year's MLK scholarship event, he had predicted that Valdovinos would be our next Chief of Police.

DANA ALBERT was \$10 happy because the "Goat for Joe" fundraiser brought in more than \$15,000 to combat mental health issues (... and also happy and relieved that it is done!) DANA was welcomed with a appreciative applause from our club members for his outstanding effort.



ANCHISA FARRANT was \$5 happy because she not only won a raffle at the "Goat for Joe" event, but also \$20 at a recent bingo gathering. VICKIE suggested that she should more than \$5 happy, but ANCHISA remained firm and stuck to a \$5 gift.



NANCY RUSSIAN was \$20 happy simply to be present at today's gathering.

RENEE was \$5 happy to be able to celebrate PAUL's grandson's 1st birthday. She would be hosting a party for the young lad this weekend. Before poor PAUL had a chance to offer his own happy dollars, our Governor goaded him, "Aren't you happy, too, PAUL?"



JAY was happy once again and threw some cash into the shoe because his great-granddaughter who weighed 2 pounds 3 oz. at birth was now weighing in over 5 pounds.

RUDY was \$10 happy that ED PARISH gave him a ride to today's Rotary meeting, but this editor believes there may be a few more "bitter" dollars in RUDY's wallet because of the doctor who took away his driver's license.

PAUL was finally able to share his happiness. \$5 happy because of some good reviews on his recently-published book and for his grandson's first birthday tomorrow.

PROGRAM

AG RENEE introduced today's speaker – Chief of Oceanside Police, TAURINO VALDOVINOS.



Chief came up through the ranks, working patrol, a neighborhood policing team, and uniform gang suppression. Later he served as a gang detective in the Special Enforcement section where he was a court-certified gang expert. Chief Valdovinos was also a Force Options Training Simulator instructor and a SWAT team member before his promotion to Sergeant in January 2013. As a Sergeant, he served as a patrol team supervisor and later supervised the Neighborhood Policing Team. In 2014, Chief Valdovinos received the Dan Bessant Community Policing Award for his work in the Libby Lake community. In June 2015, he was promoted to Lieutenant and has served in each of the department's three divisions. He was promoted to Assistant Chief, and in November of 2024, rose to his current rank of Chief of Police.

Chief Valdovinos created and manages the Oceanside Youth Partnership (OYP) program, a 16-week mentoring program for at-risk youth. In addition to his responsibilities with the Police Department, he is also an adjunct professor for the University of San Diego's Law Enforcement & Public Safety Leadership master's degree program. He also serves on the Board of Directors for Vista Community Clinic.

As Chief stepped up to the podium, he shared that he was born in Mexico, but moved to Encinitas with his parents when he was only 2 months old. His Dad worked in the flower fields. His younger brother was born here two years later. Chief's father died at about the same time. At first, Mom and her two kids lived in a trailer park on the ranch. Later they moved around a lot. His mom was eventually able to purchase a "shack" in Carlsbad which was later condemned by the city. The boys had to sleep on a dirt floor. At the age of 11, Taurino qualified for a green card. The family finally settled in Carlsbad when he was 12 years old. Taurino attended Carlsbad High School where he played football and wrestled. He earned a football scholarship from St. Mary's College. While at St. Mary's, he thought he might like to work with kids, but after a stint at student teaching, decided it was not for him. Coming back from a vacation trip to Vegas he was pulled over by a police officer. Taurino recognized the man; he was a former football player. The police officer asked him what he was going to do after he graduated, and suggested that he consider law enforcement. Previously Taurino had always run from cops, but this arresting officer told him that athletes make the best cops, because of the teamwork, diversity, and esprit de corps they learned on the playing field. Chief applied for a position in Concord, CA, but was rejected because he was not a U.S. citizen. While applying for citizenship he worked as a Computer Programmer with Wells Fargo Bank in the Bay Area. After 9/11, he decided to move back home where he applied for Law enforcement in Oceanside. Chief described Oceanside at that time as the "Wild West," with 20-25 homicides per year, mostly gang-related. Chief was proud of his four and a half years as

undercover detective. Not many Hispanics worked in that field. The job took him all over the country, working with various federal alphabet soup agencies. He decided to give up that position because he was never home. Serving in Oceanside, the promotions came quickly. He says he is just starting to get the “hang” of being Chief of Police.

He feels that his overriding purpose as Chief of Police is to create balance within the department. There has been too much turnover -- Four chiefs of police in five years. Such inconsistency causes anxiety. He plans to promote people who will be here for a while

Externally he feels his mission is to “win the hearts and minds of the community.” He instills every dispatcher, every officer, every janitor with three values: 1) work hard. (It is so easy to get lazy in government jobs); 2) respect all people; and 3) be positively impactful in a profession which is mostly negative on a day-to-day basis.

The biggest problems he sees facing the OPD are staffing and the homelessness problem. When he became Chief of Police there were 26 staff vacancies on paper, but the problem was actually bigger than that. With ten who had not yet completed their training in the police academy and another ten on the injured list and therefore unavailable to actively serve, the effective vacancy level was more like 46. Part of the problem was a 4-month hiring process which he has shortened to 30 days. As of yesterday, he said, there is now only one vacancy. However, some of the hires still need to get through academy and Basic training.

Homelessness, he stated, is not a crime and it is very difficult to deal with. He is working with the City on changing its stance and programs. Oceanside has recently hired a Homeless coordinator. He finds the whole issue to be very frustrating. With the passage of Proposition 47, many felonies became misdemeanors. The jails and prisons which housed the former felons were forced to release them onto the streets. AB109 also reduced prison populations. During the Nixon and Reagan administrations many mental health institutions were shut down, and many of those patients ended up on the streets, likewise contributing to the homelessness problem. Since homelessness itself is not a crime, all that the police can really do is issue tickets or threaten to take personal property. The recent passage of Proposition 36 has been somewhat helpful, reclassifying some misdemeanors as felonies again.

Chief Valdovinos fielded several questions:

JIM SCHRODER asked about the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) and the Navigation center (which is focused on moving people into permanent housing). Chief feels the two programs are very helpful. The HOT team routinely refers homeless people to the Oceanside Navigation Center.

FILIPPO VIOLA asked why so many of his predecessors as Chief left after such short tenure. Taurino mentioned how stressful the job could be, and that many of his predecessors left for personal and/or family reasons.

BILL DERN asked if the OPD worked with the feds on immigration enforcement. This is not allowed because of Senate Bill 56.

DARREL LARSON said that a typical stay at the Navigation Center is 30 days, while the SD Rescue Mission is for one year. Any chance of a longer-term facility in North County? Chief didn't know.

DAVE NYDEGGER asked a "crystal ball" question: "One year from now -- What will you have accomplished?" Chief hopes to have a fully-staffed PD, with all vacancies filled in special units – especially in units dealing with traffic issues and homelessness.

ROGER commented on Chief's "rags to riches" journey. Could that same scenario play out in today's political environment? Chief thought yes, it could.

VICKIE says she has recently seen more cops on street. Chief says the office receives 180 traffic complaints every day. There are only 5 motor officers. The rest of the force answers all of the incoming calls.

FILIPPO mentioned some of the dangers in city parks. His 2-year-old recently picked up a syringe at a park. Chief hopes to secure two additional positions to patrol sidewalks and parks.

PAUL asked if the OPD has contracts with private security such as Gatekeepers. Chief replied that there are no partnerships with private security groups. He also indicated that he believes private security groups have more power in California than do the police.

BILL DERN noted that the gang issue has really improved over the years. Chief said that over the last four years Oceanside averaged only 4 homicides per year, and none of them were gang-related. One of the reasons is that it has become more "pricey" to live in Oceanside. All of the recent renovation has driven the gangs away. BILL also mentioned that Mike Poehlman, a former chief of OPD, was also an Oceanside Rotary Club President. BILL asked, "Why don't you join our club, and come full circle?" Chief said there were just too many events -- every weekend / every day. He wants to be out and about in the community, and there is simply not enough time to join Rotary.

RUDY had the last word. He asked Chief about the AED program in patrol cars. Chief wasn't sure, but he believes that one or two lives are saved every year by police with such devices in their vehicles.

Editorial note: how wonderful to be connected with a city that has such leadership as Chief Taurino Valdovinos provides. Today's program was both inspirational and informative!

ANCHISA presented our speaker with a gift of succulents she arranged.



OPPORTUNITY DRAWING – In our \$1,000.00 Drawing to find the JOKER in the dwindling deck of cards, DANA ALBERT had the winning ticket, but alas – no joker.



President PAUL was reminded to remind his fellow Rotarians to leave a tip for our server. The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

COMING SOON TO OCEANSIDE ROTARY

Saturday, May 31st - Board Retreat and Brunch from 9:00 – 12:00 at RENEE'S place.

Friday, June 13th – Regular meeting – Program: RYLA recap. El Camino Country Club.
Noon.

Friday, June 27th - Demotion Dinner, El Camino Country Club 5:30pm

Saturday, June 28th - Oceanside Independence Day Parade 9am

Friday, July 11th - Rotary Social at JIM SCHRODER's House, featuring entertainment by
DARREL LARSON