



*October 25, 2019*



Our leader for the day, PP VICKIE PROSSER, strode up to the microphone WAY early at about 12:20 pm. Was she unaware of the actual time, we wondered, or was she just that eager to be back in control of our club? ... It turns out that there was a much less concerning reason for her premature podium arrival. Noting that part of today's meeting was a celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of LYN CORDER's husband Al Somit, this was the time to bring out the cake, sing the song, and have Al blow out the single candle so that the country club staff could then cut the chocolate delight into slices for us to enjoy for our dessert. So Happy Birthday, Al! (And thanks for giving us this occasion to have a really tasty slice of cake with our luncheon!)

But then we still had to wonder about VICKIE's timing when she lightly "tinged" the Rotary bell to start the meeting at 12:28 pm, using a puny little pen as her substitute gavel as she commenced to be our Substitute President du jour. She told us that she had been pressed into service because our actual President TERRI HALL was up north with her darling husband (See "Rotarians Out and About" for details of that trip) and RENEE RICHARDSON WENDEE was at a conference with *her* darling husband. Therefore the duty fell to VICKIE, and may I say she did a fine job with the meeting!





We started out with the pledge led by JIM SCHRODER, followed by songs led by JAY CRAWFORD who warbled a couple of tunes for us to join in on – “When You’re Smiling” and then “God Bless America.”

The Rotary Moment was recited by SUSAN BROWN, who hobbled up to the podium on a crutch she has had to use for seven weeks, explaining, “My middle name is ‘Grace’, because I have none.” For the Rotary Moment, she told us:

*“My fellow Rotarians, you have this power. This power to use language to share your ideas, to touch hearts, and to bring about change in the world. And Rotarians, we have the power to speak and share, to explain and to educate, to inspire and to influence. It is our responsibility to share our talents and ideas and to find meaning in other people’s messages.*

*“May we use our skills to provide service to others less fortunate and help them to be self-sustaining. May we continue to grow as Rotarians so that we stand in our community as a symbol of those willing to freely put service above self and make this, our community, and the world a better place to live.”*



In recognition of the Rotary’s worldwide Polio Plus day, we were asked to pull out \$10 each from our wallets to place in our donation jar which was passed around while a star-studded video was shown, telling us how, through the efforts of Rotary International and our partners, the dread disease has been reduced by 99% and that “Every nation will benefit from a world without polio.” The video closed with this catchphrase and challenge: “Let’s drop to Zero!”

## CLUB UPDATE



PE DALE MAAS gave us some highlights of things to come in Rotary in the weeks to come, including our board meeting on Friday November 8 at 11 am, prior to our regular meeting, the Rotary Foundation Seminar on November 9, and a reminder that our Friday meetings will be dark on both November 22 and 29. Happy Thanksgiving, everyone!

Also we can look forward to something special on the first meeting after that holiday, for on Friday December 6 DALE will be hosting our meeting at his office! More details on that to come later.

## VISITORS AND GUESTS



Joining us for this auspicious centenarian celebration were the aforementioned Al Somit along with son Scott and his wife Carol, visiting all the way from Barcelona Spain for this big birthday, all introduced by a proud LYN CORDER.



From the back of the room, LES NEWQUIST hailed his visiting wife Cricket, despite the fact that she is “Not 100 yet”, bringing a chorus of cackles and catcalls.





LOLA SHERMAN was seated next to perennial visitor Rudy Van Hunnick. JIM SCHRODER pointed out our program speaker Andra Watkins and her husband Michael. And ALEXA KINGAARD presented Gay MacNair, who comes from Santa Paula, but is now “looking for a new Rotary home.” (Gee, I wonder if anyone at the meeting might have a particular club which they might recommend...)

JAY CRAWFORD was then called upon by Temporary President VICKIE. Confused, JAY thought he was supposed to introduce FRANK COXON as a guest. But FRANK, JAY had to be reminded, is actually an active club member, and JAY also had to be reminded that it was his task to lead us in our Welcome Song.

### **CROWING ABOUT CROWN HEIGHTS**

The podium was then turned over to LARRY HATTER who apologized on behalf of the principal of Laurel Elementary who was not able to join us at this meeting due to a sinus infection. We will reschedule a time for him to come back to receive their check for literacy.



Lincoln Middle School WAS well represented today, and LARRY introduced their Community Coordinator Deirdre Colburn who handles a lot of the logistics of the Crown Heights Mentor events that we hold with their students. Invited next to the microphone was “the longest serving principal in the Oceanside Unified School District” (15 years), Steve Bessant who received from the club a check for \$1500 for library books through our literacy project matching grant. Principal Bessant said, “Thank you for your part in sustaining me through all these years” and also “I feel like the biggest taker in the world”, not only referring to the stack of books that were directly handed to him from our weekly speaker tributes and the 300 *more* books that the \$1500 check will be able to provide for their programs. But he also gets to “see the impact

of what you do has on our kids” through the mentor events, exposing the students to life and educational options that could be available to them.

He then called up some of these students themselves to talk about the experiences they have had attending the field trips to the MiraCosta campus for a soccer game (Daniella, Edgar, Ivan, and Anthony – One of them told how this “made me think more about my future and my dreams”) and as a participant in the recent LEAD workshop retreat (Rebecca, who said the sessions “inspired me, and I learned to listen to the good thoughts in my head.”) If anyone had any doubt that what we are doing through these programs make a difference for these students, you just need to see and hear these kids to know that our effort in Crown Heights is reaping dramatically real-life benefits for these kids and their outlook on life.



What a great time to send around a sign-up list for volunteers to accompany another bunch of 35 to 40 young people on the upcoming mentor event at Camp Pendleton on Wednesday, November 20. (If you missed that sign-up sheet, you can ask LARRY if there are still volunteer slots that need to be filled.)

### **HAPPY DOLLARS**



JIM SCHRODER kicked off the donations with \$5 in honor of Al Somit and his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. “That is my goal, too!” JIM exclaimed ... LYN CORDER let us know that she had made a special \$100 contribution to Polio Plus in honor of her husband’s big day ... JAY CRAWFORD was \$5 pleased that wife Anita is back safe and sound from her trip to China ... LES NEWQUIST gave \$5 to describe his upcoming trip that will make our legendary



traveler JIM SCHRODER jealous – a journey to Beautiful Barstow – specifically to Dumont Dunes to ride along on the dune buggy his son just bought. Woo Hoo!! ...

TOM BRAULT gave \$6 for the 6 performances he would be giving as the title character in “The Wizard of Oz” over the weekend.



DAVE NYDEGGER also was \$5 happy to have survived the same China trip as Anita did. DAVE particularly focused on the culinary highlights of the trip, but stated categorically that in his opinion, the “best Chinese food is at Chins.” ... DAN WILSON ‘fessed up to missing the meeting when his birthday would have been celebrated to the tune of \$56. (“Some people” he noted, “don’t pony up when they’re not here for birthdays.” Clearly, DAN is not one of those people!) DAN added another \$5 to talk about a town hall event for veterans with Mike Levin on November 9 that he is working on ... Rudy Van Hunnick split his \$60 happy dollars for a couple of reasons. First, to be able to sit next to a 100 year old. And second, he was honored to listen to a speech from a former student from Crown Heights who has gone on to receive his diploma, graduating from a university ...



PAM MYERS had been sick for a while, and was \$5 happy to be out of the hospital. But she was a bit chagrined that on her hospital writeup, “They called me ‘elderly.’ .... I’m NOT!” ... AMANDA SNIDER had \$5 to tell us about her career change learning more about auditing. She needs 6 more accounting classes to complete her studies, and one of them has been finished! ... DAVE SHORE also offered \$5 to celebrate Al’s 100<sup>th</sup> and his hope that he, too, will be able to reach that milestone. “But the chocolate cake we had today is not helping” in that quest for longevity!!



## OUR PROGRAM



Our speaker for the day had a very engaging story to tell. Andra Watkins is a New York Times best-selling author for her memoir “Not Without My Father” in which she told the story of how she turned “I wish I had” to “I’m glad I did!” in her life. But she was quick to point out that her life has not all been success and glory. In fact, she started

out by admitting, “I’m probably the biggest failure you have ever seen!” Her first big fail, she said, was picking the wrong career for herself. Although she longed for a life in musical theater, she settled for a job in accounting, and was then miserable for a decade. Then in 2009, she lost the business she had started to help small businesses and simultaneously turned 40. She figured “I need to start over – Right now!”

Friends had told her that she is a good storyteller and should try writing, and so she did just that. Fascinated by the explorer Meriwether Lewis, she invented a whole new genre of books by writing a “paranormal historical thriller” entitled *To Live Forever: An Afterlife Journey of Meriwether Lewis*. Her family said she was crazy, but her husband was very supportive in this endeavor (and in general), which has been quite a blessing in her life.

To promote this book, she decided that she would undertake the daunting task of walking the entire 444 mile Natchez Trace Parkway (from Natchez Mississippi to Nashville Tennessee) on her own, in 15 mile increments a day for over a month, giving interviews and updates along the way for publicity. Again, friends and family thought she was insane, especially because she never had been even remotely athletic. But again, her husband was encouraging, and she made plans to make the journey. The only person who was available to tag along to be her support team through the five-week trek was her 80-year-old father.

On March 1, 2014 she started out on Mile Zero of the trail. The weather was terrible on Day 3, but she knew that she had to make it to Nashville by April 3 to give a key promotional presentation, so she persisted through the horrendous weather. But she told us, “The physical agony was nothing compared to the misery

of living with my Dad”, who forgot to pick her up at the end of one of the strenuous days of hiking. The two then avoided each other and just didn’t talk at all for days on end. At Mile 167, she was sick and demoralized and in pain. “I failed. I quit!” she told herself. But two miles later, as she described it, “I couldn’t even succeed at failing!” She laid down on the ground, feeling sorry for herself for 15 minutes, but then thought about Meriwether Lewis’s experience on his difficult journey and she decided to keep going and to focus on the magical experiences of nature that she had been missing through her single-minded fixation on the steps on the trail, and to “Find the amazing thing in every day.”

She finished the walk right on time, sold a few copies of that first novel, and got a few TV appearances out of the experience. And she did hit the New York Times best-seller list - not with that Meriwether Lewis thriller, but with the memoir that she wrote about that trip with her father, when she finally connected with him for the first time in their lives together. On that trail, she learned stories from him that she had never heard before and came to know him as a person. She also learned from that trip that “Whatever stage of life you are at, don’t listen to the naysayers.” and “It’s never too late to become what you want to be.” She is proud to say that she now gets emails from strangers every day, telling her how they have chosen to make their lives better, all thanks to the insights from her writing.

Andra went on to write even more books, all of which she had for sale to interested members, including works on James Wilkinson (a traitor at the start of our country) and Theodosia Burr (the tragic daughter of Aaron Burr who is sung about in the musical *Hamilton*). If you bought a three pack of books, you got a voodoo doll (which left many of us wondering, “What the heck is that all about??”) A percentage of all of Andra’s sales to Rotary clubs is donated to Rotary literacy projects.

She wrapped up her presentation with this suggestion for all of us: “Find your next adventure. You never know where you will go!” Then, responding to a question from the audience, she told us that her next adventure is to work on two writing grants during upcoming trips to Ireland and Iceland.





Then, of course, at the close of her presentation, Andra was given the choice of a book to be donated in her name, plus a gift of either Chocolate or Cheetos. “Which do you want, dear?” she asked her husband, who then landed a Butterfinger bar. As Acting President VICKIE finished her thanks to Andra for this captivating talk, VICKIE opined, “I love the fact that she is a redhead!!”

### **OPPORTUNITY DRAWINGS**

We had two winners, as has been our custom of late. The first ticket drawn to win the bag of Woman Produced Coffee Beans from Peru was held by LYN CORDER. (Just a big day in general for the Corder / Somit family, huh!). Then the chance for the big bucks \$500 jackpot went to JIM SCHRODER who confidently drew a card, excitedly yelled, “YES!! ... No” and showed the 2 of spades for just the \$10 consolation prize.



**A FEW SHOTS FROM THE THIRD THURSDAY SOCIAL**

Look at all the smiling faces from the get together at Mission Avenue Bar and Grill on Thursday evening, October 24. (Including the return of Mr. Snugglepants!)



## **PHOTOS FROM THE LEAD WEEKEND**

The 2019 LEAD (Leadership, Ethics, Aspirations & Determination) Conference was held at Cuyamaca Outdoor School, a San Diego County Office of Education campus on October 19 & 20.

LEAD encourages young people to discuss issues of ethical responsibility, improve leadership and communication skills, become self-motivated to reach goals, and develop a positive outlook on life ... all while having fun and making friends.

Photos from this life-changing event were sent in by our club's representative, DAN WILSON.



Pic #1: Rebecca and Elisabeth, our two sponsored campers from Lincoln Middle School.







Pic #2 and 3: Happy campers! Hard to believe that these kids were complete strangers just one day before!

### **ROTARIANS OUT AND ABOUT**

On a visit to Truckee, CA, DAVE and TERRI HALL got to see their grandkids in action!



First photo: son Jason Hall, grandsons Sebastian, (senior, band) Julian (freshman, quarterback) daughter in law, Jerusha.





Second photo: Julian, number 14, leading the offense in a game won by the Truckee Wolverines, 47-0! WOO HOO!



Third photo: Celebrating the game and the grandkids with a meal together.



Fourth photo: Posing for a portrait for posterity.

Also missing in action at last Friday's meeting: Where were the WENDEE's???  
... They were off to a Leadership Conference in Ottawa, Canada. PAUL presented a program (...on his birthday day of course!)

While PAUL worked diligently, RENEE enjoyed sightseeing. She states that the landscape simply captured her heart! "First time that I really didn't want to come home!!!" RENEE confessed.







Devoted Grandpa BILL DERN traveled to the Pacific Northwest to attend the 7<sup>th</sup> birthday festivities for his grandson James. Part of the fun included a visit to the Reptile Zoo in Monroe, WA, a small zoo out in countryside. While there, they got to pet a desert tortoise and see alligators and snakes and iguanas and turtles and lizards. (What, no “Lions and Tigers and Bears”? .... Oh, my!)



**COMING SOON TO OCEANSIDE ROTARY**

November 1: OPD Sgt. JIM RIDENOUR & Officer FERRY, Homeless Outreach  
Reporter: Susan Brown

November 8: JACK FELLER, City of Oceanside  
Reporter: Jay Crawford

Saturday, November 9: ROTARY FOUNDATION SEMINAR  
8 am to noon at UCSD Institute of the Americas  
(10111 N. Torrey Pines Rd., La Jolla)

November 15: JOHN DOBKEN, San Onofre Nuclear Generation Station  
Reporter: Bill Dern

November 21: Third Thursday Social Event at Blade 1936 at 5:30pm  
– 401 Seagaze Drive, Oceanside

November 22: **Meeting DARK for Evening Social on Third Thursday**

November 29: **DARK for Thanksgiving Weekend**