

The Joshua Tree

June 15, 2021

THE GROWTH OF THE MARIJUANA BLACK MARKET

One would expect that when marijuana was legalized three years ago the criminal aspect of growing and selling would decrease, but the opposite has happened! So much so it is a challenge for Detective **Chris Bassett** and the other members of the Marijuana Enforcement Team. The team is a division of the San Bernardino County Sheriff Department and consists of four investigators and a sergeant responsible for mid to major marijuana crimes over the 20,105 square miles that make up the County of San Bernardino. The team is responsible for capturing illegal marijuana grows, both indoor and outdoor, cultivation in National Parks and illegal dispensaries.

One big reason for the rise in marijuana crimes is the fact that it is now a misdemeanor, and not a felony to illegally grow, so when someone gets caught it's just a \$500 fine. Nevertheless so far the team has taken down some 800 illegal grows. What is allowed for an adult 21 years or older include up to six plants, 1 ounce of bud, and up to eight grams on concentrated marijuana. If an individual lives in the outlying county property, they can have anywhere from 12 - 30 plants!



To grow or open a dispensary legally comes with some very expensive licensing. An individual needs a license from both the State of California and the City/County they want to open in. The State License will cost them \$100,000 per year plus a percentage tax to California. This makes it extremely hard for a legal dispensary to make a profit so what do they do? They buy their marijuana from the black market, and hence the rise in criminal activity

for legalized marijuana.

They may look the same but marijuana and hemp are vastly different. They both come from the Cannabis Sativa Plant, but hemp comes from a different strain of the plant. Hemp also has high CBD (for pain relief) and marijuana has high THC (Get High). When the team busts an illegal grow, a lot of the time it is from people applying for a hemp farms, but in actuality, they are growing weed.

While Indoor grows have doubled over the last several years, the outdoor grows have quadrupled! The team began to see the rise in outdoor grows on private lands in 2013. They started out as simple enclosures made of plywood but due to temperature changes it made growing a seasonal activity. A year later they began to see makeshift greenhouses which allowed for year round cultivation. In 2021, most outdoor grows consist solely of greenhouses, some complete with a sophisticated system of fans, lighting controls, and swamp coolers. Plants are grown either in pots or directly in the soil. If you drive along Hwy 395 between Adelanto and Kramer Junction after dark you will see a lot of outdoor grows.

Continued on page 2

This Week's Functionaries

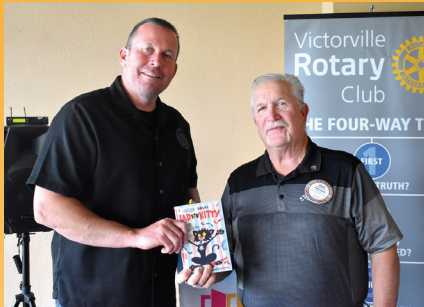
- Invocation:** Chris Ackerman
- Flag Salute:** Corey Beck
- 4-Way Test:** Dwight Johnson
- Fine Master:** Ryan McEachron

ORR'S ROARS



Thanks to both Captain John Wickum and Detective Chris Bassett for giving us all a glimpse inside of what you have to deal with on the Marijuana Enforcement Team. With the amount of questions, it may be

a good idea to bring them back for strictly a Q&A Session.



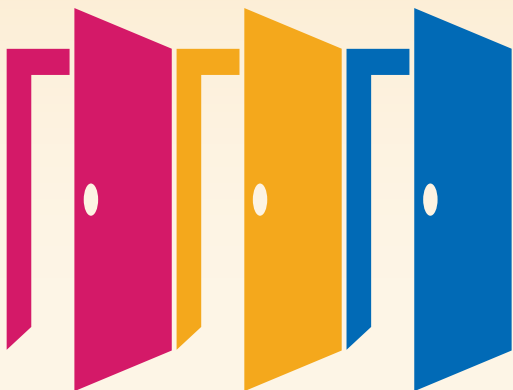
The Rotary Club of Apple Valley is looking for volunteers to help them run their Beer Garden at a variety of events in Apple Valley, including the "Concerts in the Park" series. This is a major fundraiser for them, so let's help them out and pour some beer for Rotary! Please see Dwight Johnson for more information.

Only two more weeks and I'll be demoted! After a two year stint as your Rotary President, On Saturday, June 26 I will be passing the baton over to Jon Hove at the home of Bill & Linda Scott. The party starts at 6:00pm and I hope to see you all there.

Finally, please sign up for our 5th Tuesday Rotary Meeting at Seoul Korean BBQ on June 29th. The fellowship will be at 5:30pm.

See you next week...

Steve



www.victorvillerotary.org

MARIJUANA ILLEGAL GROWTH

Continued from page 1



Illegal indoor grows are much deadlier. Many times they are right in one's own neighborhood. Some telltale signs include constantly closed blinds, small bathroom windows always open for cross air flow, debris stuck on windows, blacked out garage door windows and 8 - 10 A/C Units. It takes a lot of electricity to grow marijuana, and in an effort to not get caught, many of these illegal indoor grows do an electrical bypass. Electrical lines are tapped into before they pass through the meter. The electricity is then routed to a sub panel and then to the growing equipment. Because the electricity does not pass through the meter and is not counted and therefore stolen, and can be considered a felony if they steal \$950 worth of electricity.

Some of these houses end up going up in flames and endangering the lives of not only themselves but their neighbors. Electrocutions are caused by exposed wiring, combined with lots of water being used, and explosions come from the use of cheap aluminum wires, which melt at lower temperatures than copper wiring. These fires usually happen at the electrical bypass point. Health wise, because growing marijuana needs lots of heat and lots of moisture, many of these homes develop dangerous levels of black mold!

In 2020 alone the team conducted 599 search warrants, confiscated over 300,000 plants and made well over 250 arrests. If you'd like to report an illegal grow whether indoors or outdoors, please call the San Bernardino County Sheriff Narcotics Division at 909-387-8400 or email narc-met@sbcscd.org

Rotary Opens Opportunities

Big Blue Dice



Corey Beck had the chance to get the Blue Dice but drew a white one out of the bag and saved the chance for another Rotarian.

We will continue next week with 8 dice and \$350 for the Rotarian who can pick the Blue Dice out of the bag.

Rotary Guests

This week we welcomed **Coleen Luque** and Jay Obernolte Aide **Christopher Scott**.

Our only Stand-in this week was **Stefanie Montoya** for **Bryan Gillespie**.

Spoon of Exemption

Did you know it pays to switch to Desert Community Bank?

Esther Mears had another week with the Spoon and shared that if you open a DCB Business Checking Account, you will receive a cash bonus of \$500! Of course there are some requirements such as deposits equaling \$5,000 or more in the first 90 days and perform at least 10 qualified transactions in the same time period.



If you have the desire to get a \$500 cash bonus in your Business Checking Account, then switch over to DCB with skilled bankers with an average experience of 15 years, 24/7 mobile, online and telephone banking, plus eight locations around the High Desert.

Raffle



It is once again no surprise that **Tina Escareño** was the big winner this week! Out of the 6 tickets she bought, three of them were winners! First Tina won the \$25 Starbucks gift card from Heritage Victor Valley Medical Group, and then took home a box of Sees Candy from **Dwight Johnson**. **Esther Mears** also won some candy while Esther herself donated some March of Dimes Beanie Babies that have found new homes with **Ryan McEachron**, **Corey Beck** and yes, you guessed it, **Tina Escareño**!

Dwight also donated a bottle of wine that will be enjoyed by President **Steve Orr** and finally **Esther Mears** went away with a VUHSD blanket from **Dr. Ron Williams**.

Fine Session

Ryan McEachron was our Fine Master once again, but due to time constraints, only had time for a couple fines. The first fine went to **Dwight Johnson** in the amount of \$20 for "trying" to be a comedian during the presentation, and the second one was to **Tina Escareño** with a fine of \$10 for always winning so many raffle prizes.

The Polio Pig

Collected this week: \$11.00

Collected to Date: \$18,029.63

Total equals: 97,173 Doses!

*One dollar equals 2 doses of vaccine!
\$500 pays for a Polio Clinic!*



VICTORVILLE ROTARY CLUB OFFICERS

Board of Directors

President 2019-2021	Steve Orr
President 2021-2022	Jon Hove
President 2022-2023	Arsalee Morales
President 2023-2025	Jessica Perez
President 2025-2026	Bill Edwards
Immediate Past President	Margaret Cooker
Treasurer	Donna Wells
Executive Secretary	Margaret Cooker
Publicity/Public Relations	Kevin Kane
Club Service	Bill Edwards
Community Service	PLEASE VOLUNTEER
International Service.....	Ben Tafoya
Youth Service/Ryla & TLC	Arsalee Morales
Vocational Service	Jessica Perez
Grants.....	Margaret Cooker
Speech Contests	Jessica Perez
Scholarships.....	Esther Mears and Arsalee Morales
George Hensel Ethics Essay Contest	Ron Boyd
Membership.....	Dwight Johnson
Billing Officer	Esther Mears

Members-at-Large: Dwight Johnson & Rob Kilpatrick

Positions & Committee Chairs

BOD Secretary	Marilyn Buttlerwerth
Programs	Mike Page
Public Service.....	Rick Bessinger, Teressa DeAtley, John Wickum
Sergeant At Arms.....	Arsalee Morales
Dan Stover Music Contest.....	Dr. Bowtie Brian
S.T.A.R. Students	Jim Barnes
Fundraising.....	Bill Edwards
Flowers and Gifts	KayMarie Gregory
Joshua Tree Editor	Chris Ackerman

The Victorville Rotary Club meets every Tuesday for fellowship at 11:30 a.m. and meeting at 12:00 noon at the Green Tree Golf Course Clubhouse, 14144 Green Tree Blvd., Victorville

Make-up Days and Locations

MONDAY:	San Bernardino East, Imperial Palace, noon
TUESDAY:	Rancho Cucamonga Sunrise, 7:15 a.m. Empire Lakes Golf Course Rancho Cucamonga, 12:00 p.m., Etiwanda Gardens
WEDNESDAY:	High Desert/Hesperia Club meets 7:00 a.m., Cracker Barrel, 11612 Amargosa Rd, Victorville San Bernardino Crossroads, Hilton, noon, Barstow, Rositas, 540 Main St, 12:00 p.m.
THURSDAY:	Apple Valley, ZOOM Meetings, 1st, 2nd and 4th Thurs Ontario, 12:15 p.m., Doubletree Hotel San Bernardino, Denny's at I-15, 7 a.m. Redlands, Masonic Temple, noon
FRIDAY:	San Bernardino North, Elks Lodge, 12:05 p.m.

Calendar Dates

June 12-19: Taipei Convention (Virtual)

June 14: Board of Directors meeting

5:30 pm Meeting *In-Person or Zoom*
DCB Board Room, 2nd Floor
Hesperia and Silica Roads

June 26: Demotion Party

6:00 pm Home of Bill & Linda Scott
18136 Pier, Spring Valley Lake

Aug 21: Movie Night at the Hove's

Home of Jon & Linda Hove *(Details to follow)*

Upcoming Programs

June 22: John Kozyra, Providence, St. Mary **Topic: The New Hospital in Victorville - What We Know** (Page)

June 29: Evening Rotary Meeting
Koren BBQ, Victorville • 5:30pm

July 6: Comedy Program (Hove/Barnes)

July 13: Dan Austin, High Desert Heart Institute
Topic: Health Prevention Post Covid-19 (Page)

July 20: Ryan McEachron, ISU-ARMAC **Topic: The Insurance Industry Post-Covid** (Page)

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