



The Joshua Tree



July 23, 2024

THE GREAT ESCAPE TO DISCOVER FREEDOM

The Club received a visit this week from **Hildy Valenzuela Wendtland**, Rotarian with the San Bernardino Sunset Club, Realtor and author. Her memoir, "Barefoot To Freedom," paints a vivid portrait of a life shaped by communism dictatorship and the quest for her personal liberation.

On April 1st, 1980, a bus with hopeful asylees crashed into the Peruvian embassy in Havana, Cuba. Within 48 hours, over 10,800 people occupied every inch of the 28,000-square-foot embassy. Among them was a fourteen-year-old girl clinging to her younger brother. Relying on the wisdom of her father, Hildy also clung to hope. Hope that would see them through appalling conditions, near starvation, and the unpredictable desperation of those around them.

Hildy shared her story of having to stand in the same place for over 50 days inside the Embassy, knowing if she gave up and left, then her life would be over. In addition, she saw the worst of human behavior rear its ugly head, as the fight for survival took over for many in the Embassy.



In the word's of her dying father, "I will die here, so you can have freedom".

Her strength was further tested by her escape on a small boat, which led her being airlifted onto a Coast Guard ship, clutching onto the gurney of her already dead father.

Much of her story shaped her into her passion for the freedoms of America. She encouraged every attendee

to vote, not matter what side of the political spectrum you fall into. Make sure you have your voice heard at the ballot box.

Hildy's life experiences in Cuba as a child during the Cold War and the cruelties of communism toward non-government sympathizers are woven into this tale of survival.

Barefoot to Freedom is a real-life example of the perils of collective thinking and the threat of contemporary socialism. A must-read warning of what happens when democracy is not defended.

Finally, in the words of Hildy herself, "When the why is bigger than your circumstances, the human spirit is unbreakable".



This Week's Functionaries

Invocation: **Chris Ackerman**

Flag Salute: **Stefanie Montoya**

4-Way Test: **Dan Harley**

Fine Master: **Ryan McEachron**

GILLESPIE'S GAB



Thank you to Hildy Valenzuela Wendtland for stopping by this week and sharing her story of escape from

Communist China in her book, "Barefoot to Freedom". I encourage every Rotarian to

pick up a copy, either physically or digitally from your favorite bookseller.



On July 30th we will have another 5th Tuesday Rotary Meeting and once again meet over at Pancho Villas Mexican Grill in Restaurant Row in Victorville. The time will be 5:00pm and I hope to see many of you there for food and fellowship.

Thank you to members of the Rotary Club of Apple Valley to share information on their upcoming Veteran's BBQ in Apple Valley this November 9th. More information will be coming soon, and I am currently in discussions with President Peter Allen on a partnership between our two Clubs.

Remember that Congressman Jay Obernolte will speak to the Club on August 20th. Please sign up for your attendance and invited guests as soon as possible to Margaret Cooker. We'd like to fill the big room at the Bear Valley Country Club that day.

Bryan

Photos from This Week



THE MAGIC OF ROTARY

THE MAGIC OF ROTARY

Big Blue Poker Chip



Ryan McEachron picked the Blue Poker Chip, and took home a whopping \$500! Congratulations on picking the winning chip. We will start over again next week with 14 chips and \$200 for the one lucky Rotarian who has their ticket drawn.

Fine Session

Ryan McEachron served as our Fine Master this week and began by fining birthday boy **Bo Goulet** \$56 in honor of reaching 56 years young! When **Mike Johnson** showed up for the meeting, he shook hands with everyone at the table...except the Fine Master. That faux pas cost him \$10. Inasmuch as he wanted to fine Apple Valley Rotarian **Dan Harley**, Ryan knew he couldn't, so Dan offered up a \$20 fine for himself!

Finally it was time to auction the Spoon for August. Ryan opening the bidding for himself at \$50, and was counter bid on by **Henry Phan** on behalf of **Mike Page** for \$75. In the end, **Bryan Gillespie** took possession for a cool \$100.

Rotary Guests

This week we welcomed **Kristi Casteel** from the VVWRA, who attended with **Darron Poulsen** and VVTA's **Tisha Lopez** once again attended with **Chris Ackerman** to continue her training as the newsletter backup. President **Bryan Gillespie** had **Stefanie Montoya** with him this week and **Mike Johnson** invited Flagstar Bank President **Ovi Cak**. **Walter Alvarez** joined us again too.

Our speaker this week, **Hildy Valenzuela Wendtland**, was also accompanied by her husband, **Dennis Wendtland**.

From the Rotary Club of Apple Valley (Victorville East), we welcomed former President and Assistant District Governor **Dan Harley**, current Club President **Peter Allan** and Vice President **Rick Bui**.

Our Stand-In for this week was **Henry Phan**, who attended on behalf of **Mike Page**.

Raffle

This week a two pack of Sharpie pens from **Mike Johnson** will be used for the new school year by **Stefanie Montoya** and a Flagstar Bank Piggy Bank & Mousepad was received by **Ryan McEachron**.

Speaking of a new school year, a Red Rock RV backpack from **Russ Stringham** was won by our President **Bryan Gillespie**.

Birthday boy **Bo Goulet** was a double winner this week, taking back to Coldwell Banker two Victor Valley Transit bean bag phone holders and microfiber cloths from **Chris Ackerman**.



Finally, a bottle of wine from **David North** will be enjoyed by Apple Valley Rotarian **Dan Harley**!

Proposed Member

If you protest the admission of this member please respond in writing by 5 p.m. July 29 to President Bryan Gillespie.

Dr. Derek King

Excelsior Charter Schools

Superintendent

Classification: Charter School: Superintendent

Sponsor: Bill Scott

Rotary
Club of Victorville, CA



The Polio Pig

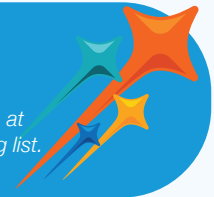
Collected this week: \$24.50

Polio Pig: \$9.50 + Apple Valley Rotary \$15 = \$24.50

Collected to Date: \$20,593.83

Total equals: 102,166 Doses!

**One dollar equals 2 Doses of Vaccine!
\$500 pays for a Polio Clinic!**



VICTORVILLE ROTARY CLUB OFFICERS

Board of Directors

President 2024-2025	Bryan Gillespie
President 2025-2027	Bill Edwards
President 2027 - 2028	Please be Interviewed
Immediate Past President	Steve Murray
Executive Secretary/Foundation/Grants	Margaret Cooker
Treasurer/Scholarships	David North
Youth Services/Ethics Essay	Ron Boyd
Club Service & Membership	Bill Edwards
Community Service/Speech Contests	Mike Johnson
Vocational Service	Please Volunteer
International Service.....	Ben Tafoya
Member At Large, Young Leaders Contact.....	Arsalee Morales
Member At Large, Special Projects	Rob Kilpatrick

Members-at-Large: Bob Basen, Darron Poulsen, Angel Espino

Positions & Committee Chairs

BOD/PP Secretary.....	Pam Murray
Special Billing	TBD
Public Service Awards	Please Volunteer
Teacher Mini-Grants	Angel Espino
Dan Stover Music Contest.....	Angel Espino
Joshua Tree Editor	Chris Ackerman
Read B4K	Please Volunteer
Foundation & Grants	Margaret Cooker
Food Baskets.....	Please Volunteer
Interact (Junior Rotary).....	Please Volunteer
Programs	Mike Page
Fundraising	Stefanie Montoya
S.T.A.R. Students	Angel Espino
Club Learning Facilitator.....	Please Volunteer

The Victorville Rotary Club meets every Tuesday for fellowship
at 11:30 a.m. and meeting at 12:00 noon at the Bear Valley
Country Club, 13229 Spring Valley Parkway, 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:	San Bernardino Crossroads, Hilton, noon, Barstow, DiNapoli's Firehouse, 1358 E Main St, Barstow, CA
THURSDAY:	Apple Valley, Rusty Bull, 13685 John Glenn Rd, Apple Valley, Noon. 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

- Aug 12: Board of Directors Meeting**
5:00pm Fellowship
5:30pm Board Meeting
Location: Robar Enterprises
17671 Bear Valley Road, Hesperia, CA
- Aug 12: 2023-2024 ReadB4K Backpack Giveaway**
10:00am
VESD Family Resource Center
Located off Mariposa Road
Please join this celebration and show your support of this program

Upcoming Programs

- July 30: 5th Tuesday Evening Meeting**
Pancho Villas Mexican Grill • 5pm
11620 Amargosa Rd, Victorville, CA
- Aug 6:** Marisol Escalante, Founder, Difference
Maker Academy **TOPIC "My Journey
Becoming an American Citizen"**
(Page)
- Aug 13:** Jonathan Weldy, Silverwood Director
of Development **TOPIC "Silverwood
Development"** (Page)
- Aug 20: Congressman Jay Obernolte** (Page)

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