

The Joshua Tree



December 31, 2024

THE HALF-YEAR ROTARY WRAP UP

As we approach the halfway point of President **Bryan Gillespie's** Rotary year, let's take a moment to reflect on the speakers, events, and achievements that have marked our journey so far.



The year kicked off with a powerful presentation from **Brad Letner**, a former member and the visionary behind our successful Read B4K program. Other highlights included local experts like **Dr. Derek King**, who shared insights on charter schools, **Bo Goulet**, who discussed the evolving real estate market, and **Kevin Mahaffy**, CEO of Exquadrum, who presented on groundbreaking aerospace innovations.



We also heard inspiring stories of resilience in the face of adversity. **Hildy Valenzuela Wendtland** shared her incredible journey of escaping

communist Cuba as a young girl, while **Marisol Escalante** spoke about her escape from Mexico and her escape from the dangerous life of a cartel boss. **Tony Marshall**, a former Vietnam POW, made two appearances to recount his harrowing experiences during the war.

Our community engagement was bolstered by visits from elected officials and their representatives.

Congressman **Jay Obernolte** and **Dakota Higgins**, representing Supervisor **Paul Cook**, highlighted the county's focus on public safety and its importance to our local community.



In addition to these events, 68 educators from the High Desert participated in our Teacher Mini-Grant program, receiving over \$20,000 in grants to support their important work in the classroom!



We also enjoyed several wonderful social events, including the always-popular "Movie Night at the Hoves," which brought together great food,

fun, and fellowship. The Read B4K program hosted a successful backpack giveaway, providing kindergarten-bound students with the essential tools for success.



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GILLESPIE'S GAB

I am filled with both excitement and gratitude for what lies ahead in 2025.

The Rotary Club of Victorville has always been a beacon of service, and as your President, I am honored to continue our mission of making a positive impact in our community and beyond. The year 2025 will be a year of growth, renewal, and continued service to those who need it the most. Together, we will build on the foundation of our past achievements and embrace the opportunities that lie ahead.

In the coming year, we will focus on strengthening our commitment to education, community development, and the fight against global challenges such as poverty and disease. Through new projects, increased community partnerships, and innovative initiatives, we will ensure that our efforts are felt by more people than ever before. I encourage all of you to bring your passion, creativity, and dedication to the table as we continue our work as leaders in the community. We have the power to make 2025 a year of extraordinary change, and I have no doubt that each and every one of you will play a critical role in achieving our goals.

Finally, as we look forward to the upcoming year, let us remember the core values that define Rotary: fellowship, integrity, diversity, and service above self.

Bryan

Year End Wrap-up

We also had two lively 5th Tuesday Evening meetings at PV Mexican Grill and Outback Steakhouse.



Escalante, Program Director at VESD Educational Center, who was honored with an honorary membership for his dedication to growing the Read B4K program.



This year, we've welcomed several new members, including **Walt Alvarez** of El Dorado Broadcasters, **Dr. Derek King**, Superintendent of Excelsior Charter School, **Carl Coles**, Superintendent of the WUHSD and **Jorge**



Sadly, we also said goodbye to a valued member, **Mr. John Kroencke**, who will be greatly missed.

As we look back on all that we've accomplished so far, we can be proud of the impact we've made in our community, and we're excited for the remainder of the year ahead!



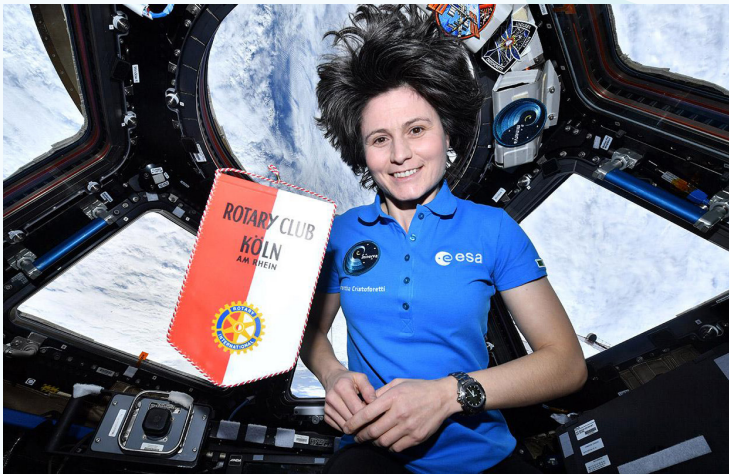
**THE MAGIC
OF ROTARY**

THE MAGIC OF ROTARY

One Rotarian's Journey's into Outer Space

Dozens of members of the Rotary Club of Köln am Rhein gather on a pleasant Monday evening at one of the famous Kranhäus office buildings, architectural gems shaped like upside down L's over the Rhine River with the towers of Cologne Cathedral visible in the distance. The night's speaker, an out-of-this-world member of the club, is scheduled to give the Rotarians a virtual tour of her workplace. The Wi-Fi connection on her end is finicky, and they wait eagerly.

At last, she appears, and that's when this meeting takes a decidedly different turn. Because **Samantha Cristoforetti**, an astronaut aboard the International Space Station, is floating.



Cristoforetti is four months into her second stint on the space station, a research vessel about the size of a six-bedroom house that orbits the Earth every 90 minutes. Her hair set loose from the confines of gravity in a way that would make an '80s metal rocker jealous, she takes questions and wows club members with the cosmic views. "Most of the time I try to take meetings from the cupola, because then you can show people the Earth from the windows," she says in an interview with Rotary magazine.

Astronauts' personal items are rigorously monitored; they must meet a strict weight limit of only 3.3 pounds total. Among her select few items, Cristoforetti has included the red-and-white banner of the Köln am Rhein Rotary club. As the meeting closes, her fellow club members thank her with thunderous applause.

The European Space Agency had recruited astronaut candidates only twice before, most recently in the early 1990s, when Cristoforetti was a teenager. So when the agency announced it was accepting applications in 2008, she knew that was her once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

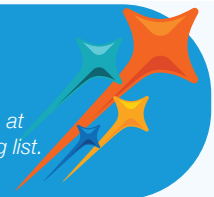
Along with 8,412 other qualified applicants, she toiled through the astronaut recruitment process, which included aptitude tests, psychological evaluations, medical exams, and interviews. She brushed up on her Russian language skills using a Harry Potter audio-book. ("I still have a small but enviable vocabulary of Russian magical terms," she writes in her book.) Finally, she received the news she'd been waiting to hear — that she had fulfilled her childhood dream. "When you get that phone call that says you've been selected it's like, Wow, what are the chances of this really happening?" she says.

In September 2009, she began training for missions to the International Space Station. For spacewalk training, she practiced underwater to simulate weightlessness. She was fitted for both Russian and American spacesuits; the American gloves alone required 26 measurements. And she prepared for emergencies that she hoped would never happen — just little workplace mishaps like becoming untethered from the space station and floating away.



It was during one of these trainings that **Bernd Böttiger**, a member of the Rotary Club of Köln am Rhein, first met Cristoforetti. Böttiger, an internationally renowned specialist in emergency medicine, teaches astronauts resuscitation procedures in case of an emergency on the space station. "She impressed me as being extremely positive, extremely tough, extremely straightforward, extremely focused," he says. "I can easily imagine how they found her among the thousands of applicants."

Read Full Article at: www.rotary.org



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	Esther Mears (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

Jan 6: **Board of Directors Meeting**
5:00pm Fellowship
5:30pm Board Meeting
Location: Robar Enterprises
17671 Bear Valley Road, Hesperia, CA

Upcoming Programs

- Jan 7:** Nicole Orr and Katie Berrios, Providence St. Mary **TOPIC "Coordinating Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence in the High Desert"** (Page)
- Jan 14:** **VVC Superintendent Dr. Dan Walden** (Acosta)
- Jan 21:** **Dan Stover Music Contest** (Espino)
- Jan 28:** **High School 4-Way Speech Contest** (Johnson)
- Feb 3:** Col. Tony Marshall USAF Retired **TOPIC "Millionaire Minds Kids Aviation Club"** (Page)
- Feb 11:** **OPEN**
- Feb 18:** **Junior High 4-Way Speech Contest** (Johnson)
- Feb 25:** Melanie Ajanwachuku **TOPIC "Fueling Life: How Smart Nutrition Choices Empower Health and Longevity"** (Page)

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