

EARLY BIRD WEEKLY



NewbergRotaryEarlybirds.org

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Last week was charter member and our first elected president, Bob Travers (Kenny was our founding president).

This is Bob's business story.

While working with Los Angeles County Fire Dept a friend had a side business jobbing plants like cacti and "dish gardens." He would fill vans and sell to Builders

Plantscaping, Waterscaping and Moss Products.

The company would become one of the first interior plant services in the country to offer franchises and was covered by the LA Times, thanks to the PR Service they hired.

Total InnerSpace included tropical plants, Honeywell clean air, Muzak, aromatherapy, and ergonomic office furniture.

Interior Plantscaping was sales, lease and care of plants.

Waterscaping was design and installation.

InteriorScape Products saw the introduction of plant base coverings and MossCloth, the one product that came with him

to Oregon.

In 1975 UC Davis studied communication between plants and humans using polygraphy (more on that).

Benefits of indoor plants. Most plants absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen during the day. Some, however, are opposite making better bedroom companions because they release oxygen at night. Orchids, succulents and bromeliads are some examples.

UC Irvine, Sociology Dept, under Dr. Richard Stokols did a two year study on the elevation of mood and productivity in the workplace when plants were added to the work space.

[NASA's BioHome at Stennis Space Center](#) used common indoor plants as living air purifiers removing contaminants like benzene and formaldehyde among others.

The BioHome study was a boon in Bob's marketing efforts to tight construction and "sick building syndrome."

[Wikipedia has a lengthy version of NASA's list](#) by plant names, their health benefits, and best use placements.

The fun part comes with some of the other studies of the 1970s and 1980s around how plants "communicate."

In Search Of, hosted by the late Leonard Nimoy, had a segment called [Other Voices](#) suggesting that "plants have perceptions not unlike human senses."

The segment included the work of "Cleve" Backster, best known for his work with the Army and CIA's lie detector testing.

Bob met Richard and a sushi restaurant. As the men talked it became apparent he knew a lot about Cleve's experiences with polygraph and plants. Bob later learned that Richard was the polygrapher who interrogated Charles Manson, was part of the study at UC Berkeley, and assisted in the making of Nimoy's episode.

He had also been approached by the military with a cease and desist order because his work was too close to their own.

Bob and Judy were invited, among others, to Richard's home. Judy participated in an exercise based on simple playing card identification. By process of deduction, he guessed the card she had in her head.

He hooked up the polygraph to the plant and got the same results with her not speaking answers, just thinking them.

Comments and Questions:

Tesmer: Tomatoes like Motown.

Doyle: Noticed that removing a tree will stress neighboring trees.

Bridges: Law enforcement will drop charges on a good polygraph. Courts consider polygraphs inadmissible.

Editor's Musing: Did the apple tree rat out Adam and Eve?



Emporiums and Gemcos (both now defunct) and other outlets.

In 1972 Bob started doing the same with his friend keeping LA County and Bob working Orange County serving businesses and evolved into weekly indoor plant care.

In 1975 he formed TropiCare Plant Service, an entity that existed until 1994 when the Travers' relocated to Oregon.

The entire interior plantscape industry grew rapidly. For Bob, in three years' time he went from schlepping out of the back of a van to a full plant care contract service.

The theory that humans connect with plants was becoming more widely accepted. Remember the age of macrame hangers?

Around that time "sick building syndrome" became a thing and the EPA determined that construction materials could be carcinogenic.

Alfred Graf was one of the pioneers of the industry and wrote numerous books on care and maintenance of tropical plants. Hey look, Amazon has one for sale!

Better buy it quick though, there's only one new one left!

By 1981 TropiCare Plant Service would become the 5th largest plantscaper in southern California servicing over 500 accounts and segmenting into four divisions: Total InnerSpace,



Exotic Plant Manual: Requirements, Propagation

Unknown Binding – January 1, 1975

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