

The Award Winning

Malibu Rotary Club Surfwriter

May 3, 2017

Official Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Malibu
Malibu Rotary Club President of Record Bill Wishard
Malibu Rotary Club President of the Month (May) Robert Syvertsen
Malibu Rotary Club President Elect Bianca Torrence
Pictures by John Elman

Edited by Dr. John W. Elman

In This Issue (click underlined topics for web link when connected to the Internet)

- Last Week Author Philippa Sklaar talks about "The Light Side of Abuse" .
- Next Malibu Rotary Club Meeting Malibu Rotary Club May 10 morning 8:00 a.m. Pepperdine Graziadio Graduate campus meeting in LC 152 —This will be a Club Assembly led by Malibu President of the Month Bob Syvertsen
- Malibu Rotary Awards its \$3,300 Fire Academy Scholarship May 17
- Check [Calendar](#) on Malibu Rotary website www.maliburotary.org
- Rotary International Website: www.Rotary.org
- Rotary District 5280 Website:www.rotary5280.org/
- RI President (2016-2017) John F. Germ
- Rotary District 5280 Governor (2016-2017) Greg O'Brien

**Philippa Sklaar talks about
“The Light Side of Abuse”**



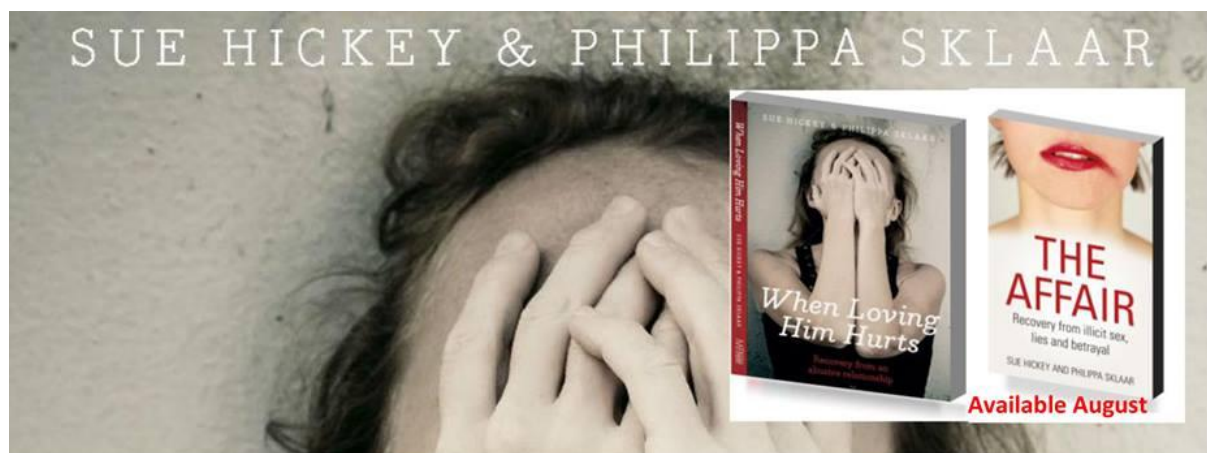
Philippa Sklaar is a survivor of abuse, author, coach and advocate. Philippa immigrated to the USA from South Africa after she fled from a violently abusive marriage and resolved to learn a lesson and be more careful next time. In America she met a man who, on the surface, was everything that her second husband was not. Until she owned her own contribution to the dance of abuse she was destined to repeat the pattern. Her story exists as proof of this. With her psychologist Sue Hickey she co-wrote *When Loving Him Hurts* – recovery from an abusive relationship and *The Affair* - recovery from illicit sex, lies and betrayal. Prior to career in domestic violence advocacy and writing self help books Philippa was a chef and is the author of *Hot Cuisine*. Her clients included dignitaries such as Nelson Mandela and Elizabeth Taylor was her first client in LA. She appeared in the Food Network’s Guy’s Grocery Games with Guy Fieri and with Margaret Cho in Blind Dinner Party.

Her commitment to reduce domestic violence led her to create a nonprofit, The Women’s Voice Project. Her programs have been accepted by the LAUSD, the LAPD (Newton Division) and The California Institution for Women.

When she was thinking about a title for her talk at the Malibu Rotary Club, she didn’t want the subject of domestic violence be too heavy for the audience and came up with the title of her talk “The Lighter Side of Abuse.”

Joan Rivers said “If you *laugh* at it, you can deal with it, and if you don’t, you can’t deal with it.”

Domestic Violence is the only diagnosis that is still shrouded in shame and often treated with contempt. There are so many misconceptions and myths about domestic violence that are simply not true. Through all her divorces Philippa kept the same South African psychologist, Sue Hickey. Sue was thinking about writing a book about domestic violence, but knew that if she wrote it alone, it would be more like a text book. With Philippa’s examples and story telling ability she knew it would be better, have more public appeal if she co-wrote it with Philippa. *When Loving Him Hurts* was the successful result. It was so successful that they



collaborated on a second book *The Affair*.

Philippa said that before she became involved in domestic abuse she thought it was something that happened in poorer communities, not the one she grew up in. Her father was the mayor of Johannesburg in South Africa. Her mother was an actress, and Philippa also studied drama in college. In fact at her presentation in front of the Malibu Rotary Club on May 3, it was obvious that each time she speaks the drama background and stage presence comes to the fore. The imagery she elicits when talking about the domestic abuse she has suffered is palpable. The books she has written are an analysis of what and why she experienced what she did, but if you if you get a chance to see Philippa live do so.

Philippa tells us although women are never to blame for being abused, they must take ownership of their role in an abusive relationship if they hope to break the cycle. “I had no idea that a majority of abuse takes place without a fist or a hand being raised”

She hopes her book, *When Loving Him Hurts*, will help women unravel “the complexities of abuse,” and emphasize the need to look inward to understand their role in the “dance of abuse.”

Having been married three times since she was 20, each time to an abusive man, Sklaar has years of experience with domestic abuse.

While her first and third husbands were emotionally abusive, it was her second husband, a South African media mogul, who was “not only violently abusive, but he was also addicted to substances. For the longest time, I blamed the substances every time he hit me,” she said.

She recalled an incident while they were on vacation in Thailand. She overheard him having a flirtatious phone call with a woman. When she confronted him, the argument escalated to the point that he hit her.

“He hit me so hard that I fell on the floor... He left me crying into the carpet,” she said.

“In the cab on the way to the airport, he put his arm around me and he was apologizing. I felt so important and so special and so empowered. He was telling me how much he loved me, and the lesson I taught him that day was that it was OK to beat me.”

She said although she eventually left him, she didn't examine her first two marriages or her own contribution.

"I just saw them as these horrible, abusive men and I wanted to go live in America so I could start my life afresh. All I did was relocate my pathology and myself to America, and there I met husband No. 3. After I married him, I started noticing the same syndrome, without the violence," she said.

"It was after that marriage that I finally had to look at myself enough to see what it was about me – it wasn't a coincidence that I just happened to choose all these men. The common denominator in these marriages was me."

Sklaar's therapist Sue Hickey, who practiced for more than 30 years, asked her to co-write *When Loving Him Hurts*, to share her experience as a woman who contributed to the "dance of abuse" and learned to overcome her self-destructive pathology. "Until we understand what that is, we'll continue repeating the pattern. My story is proof of that," Sklaar said.

She said that until she was able to understand why she felt she needed to be loved and validated by a damaged man, she would continue to jump from one abusive relationship to another.

"How do you explain to someone why you want to hug a shark? That the hands that beat me, I wanted them to comfort me? How do I explain to myself that the man who hit me, kicked me, punched me, pulled out my hair, spat in my face, that I wanted him to love me? I mean, it's insane."

Although she acknowledges that some people may confuse her message – that a woman must acknowledge her role in an abusive relationship – as a kind of blame-the-victim mentality, she said, although women are "never, ever to blame for the abuse," they are part of the solution.

"As soon as I took responsibility for what my contribution was, I can't begin to tell you how empowering that was. I was no longer at the mercy of anybody," Sklaar said, adding that the book outlines five skills and strategies that women can do to work on a solution.

Since her third marriage ended Sklaar said she is content being on her own. “Now I value my time alone and I love who I am now,” she said. “My worthiness isn’t dependent on anyone else’s opinion of me. That took a long time.”

The first self help book Philippa wrote was *Pleased to Meet Myself* in 2011. It is a memoir on relationship addiction, surviving abuse and getting through it all by cooking. Each chapter ends with a Food For Thought section of musings, lessons learned, a list of questions for the reader and the recipes mentioned in the story. This book combines Philippa’s humor, background in the food industry, and the beginning realizations of the repeating pattern that had caused her to repeat the same mistakes in her relationships. To make her next book more effective it would need the help of her long time therapist Sue.



Since Philippa had moved to America and her therapist was in Johannesburg, South Africa, and they spent a lot of time on the phone. Philippa knew it would be easier to complete the book if she could convince therapist Sue to come to America so they could work on the book together. Philippa was living in the picturesque Berkshires in Massachusetts, and they worked on the book there, finishing it in a couple months.

At first they were just going to publish it as an e-book. But there was so much interest in it and they felt it so important to get the word out to all the women who could be helped by their message they decided to have it printed.

The book is available on Amazon or on Philippa's website <https://philippasklaar.com/>. She also writes a blog.

The following is her blog from January 26, 2017 which she calls "How to Find the Golden Goose in Abuse."

"You know how you thought that when you met the man of your dreams he would change? And he did. For the worst. But you still held onto him because you believed that having anybody was better than having nobody. No matter how he treated you, you believed that if you worked just a little bit harder, had one more conversation and a little more time, he would change. You were determined to work out the magic formula that would transform him. It was the power of your love that would realize his potential – if only he would just listen!

I, like you, a victim of abuse, believed that all I was worth was a man who beat me, punched me and cheated on me. I shrunk each time I heard, "first time a victim, second time a volunteer," "if you go back you deserve what you get" and "why don't you just leave?"

It took seven long years before I accepted I was an abused woman. It seemed impossible that I could be one or that my husband was an abuser. He was far too rich, too educated, and too sophisticated. I came from a prominent political family, was the mayor's daughter and was far too affluent to be a victim of abuse. After all, abused women lived in poverty stricken areas, were uneducated and their abusers were skin heads with facial scars and missing teeth.

Weren't they?

Lifestyles of the rich and vicious

My opinion changed dramatically one night when I found myself on the sidewalk, bleeding, my clothes torn. He had tried to put a cigar out on my cheek, bit my mouth until it filled with blood and tried to choke me. I had no idea where I got the strength but I managed to break free, picked up the emergency remote and ran out of the house. In South Africa, I lived in a gated community with security guards roaming the streets. I was safer on the streets of Johannesburg, the crime capital of the world, than in my own home. No sooner had I pressed the button when the headlights of the patrol car appeared at the bottom of the drive way. While I waited for the police to arrive I asked,

"Is it unusual to receive a call like this from this area?"

“No,” the security guard replied. “We receive more calls from this area than any other”.

That was my first in a long list of beliefs that changed. Abuse is a great leveler. It reaches everywhere and everyone.

Another belief in need of correction was that of my fairy-tale endings. As abused women, we refuse to give up on “happily ever after” despite the evidence that proves otherwise. We cling to the belief that our beast will turn into the prince, the frog will magically transform when kissed and our Knight in Shining Armani will whisk us off into the sunset.

Or is there a different story?

My story is your story because abuse only has one story.

Most of us abused women are codependents. We equate love with need and unless we are working like a slave for a man our love isn't worth anything. Our pathology demands damaged, wounded men to prove we can save them.

When I finally accepted I was an abused woman, I was riddled with shame. It was a crippling, confusing shame. I wanted the hands that beat me to comfort me. How did I explain that to myself or anyone else? I “loved” and wanted a man who kicked me, pulled out bunches of my hair and spat in my face. “It’s like wanting to hug a shark – why on earth would anyone do that?”

It took a third abusive marriage for me to finally understand that the common denominator was me. Until I took responsibility for my contribution to the dance of abuse I was destined to repeat the pattern.

The Golden Goose

I was living alone yet still feeling like a victim, stuck in the story of what had happened to me. Despite my love and commitment, I was cheated on. My devotion for which I expected applause and reward had resulted in violence and lies. Life wasn't fair. But the only voice I was listening to was my own. I had begun to emulate my abuser in that I was abusing myself worse than they ever did. That was a wake-up call.

There is always a payoff to self-destructive behavior and for me it was that as long as I blamed and complained I didn't have to take responsibility for my life. That sickened me. There is nothing more dis-empowering than being a victim. I could only imagine what I could achieve if put all my time and energy into myself and realized my own potential instead of my men. In that instant I became my project.

I read every self-help book, attended Kabbalah classes, and even went to an ashram in India in search for answers. Slowly and painstakingly my search moved from outside to within and a new value system emerged. Everything I had thought was valuable and had assigned meaning to became insignificant and everything I believed was true, wasn't.

Scott Peck wrote in *The Road Less Traveled* that throughout our lives our sick side and our healthy side battle each other. The sick side is the insane voice of the ego that never shuts up. It's the running commentary of labels, judgments, criticisms and comparisons that assigns meanings to every object, situation and event. It keeps us locked in past and future where fear, guilt, pain, loss, lack and conflict reign. It constantly feeds us lies based on our insecurities and we react to them as if they were true. It is the ultimate abuser.

The healthy side is the place deep within that resonates with truth, love and peace. It's the place where we experience an "aha" moment as a truth lands perfectly or experience the magnificence of nature. It's the voice of wisdom that whispers when we are still. This is the voice that heals us – not the tyrannical voice of the ego.

Abuse taught me the power of choice. I get to choose what thoughts I want, what feelings I want and who I want in my life. No one can rob us of our inner peace unless we choose to allow it.

I am not for a minute saying that changing your world view is easy. It takes work, commitment and dedication. I struggled for years with abuse and one of the reasons I co-wrote *When Loving Him Hurts* was to short circuit other women's journeys. If I could go from having zero self-esteem to moving across the world and publishing three books, what can you achieve? My first book, *Hot Cuisine*, was about men and food and my first client in LA was Elizabeth Taylor. In 2015 I was invited by my ex-therapist, Sue Hickey, to co-write *When Loving Him Hurts* and the following year we wrote *The Affair*.

Do you have any idea what that felt like when my ex-THERAPIST issued that invitation? To co-write a book with someone you hold in the highest regard when for years you believed you were worthless? I still tear up when I think about it.

I have since formed a non-profit organization called The Women's Voice Project to help abused women. I get to go out every day and help make a difference in people's lives. Abuse gave me my life purpose. It was how I discovered my worth and how you can discover yours.

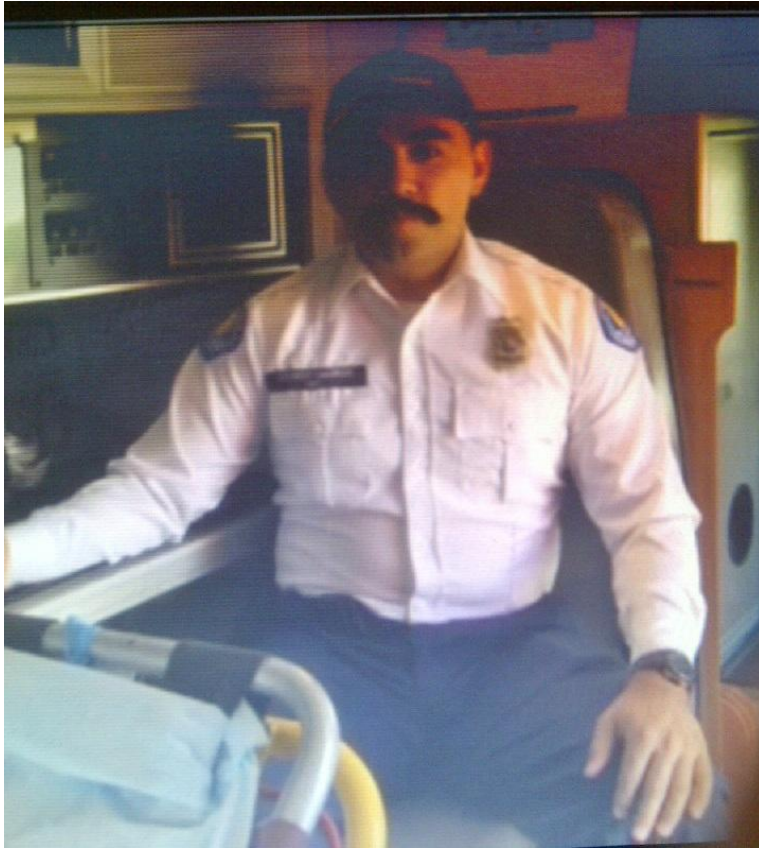
It requires a choice.

Today you can choose it.

If I found the golden goose in abuse, so can you."

Anthony Pedro Marron will be presented his \$3,300 Malibu Rotary Fire Academy Scholarship on May 17

On May 17 Malibu Rotary Club will award a \$3300 Scholarship to Anthony Pedro Marron, an EMT currently with CARE who takes 911 calls out of the City of Commerce. He has been accepted and enrolled at El Camino Fire Academy at El Camino College in Torrance. The Malibu Rotary unanimously voted to award Anthony the scholarship at the Malibu Rotary Club meeting April 19, 2017 after viewing a video which was part of the scholarship application process.



The video can be seen on the Malibu Rotary Club Facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Malibu-188099427908203/>.

In order to apply, students had to email Malibu Rotary

Club (at MalibuRotaryScholarship@gmail.com) a 60-90 second video explaining :

- (1) Why they want to be a firefighter, and
- (2) How winning the \$3,300 scholarship would positively impact their life.

Additionally, the fire academy student must email the Malibu Rotary Club:

- (1) Student's name
- (2) Student's phone number
- (3) Name of the Fire Academy they are enrolled in
- (4) Address of the Fire Academy they are enrolled in

The Deadline to apply was Midnight on Sunday, April 16, 2017.

Anthony's video was submitted on time and all who viewed it agreed he was a worthy candidate. We will have Anthony and representative from Fire Fighting Academy at the May 17 meeting Malibu Rotary Club meeting starting at 7:30 a.m.in EC 116 in the main Villa Graziadio Executive Center. A buffet breakfast will be available..

Other News and Guests at Last Malibu Rotary Club Meeting

Bill Wishard is the only one from the Malibu Rotary Club representing the club at the Rotary District convention held this weekend in the Big Bear mountains. Sunday the District honors those Rotarians who passed away during the year, and Malibu Rotarian Fred Cornet will be honored at that service. Bill will report on the Rotary District convention at the next meeting, May 10, which will be a Malibu Rotary Club Assembly. At this meeting we will talk about the meeting of May 17. A special meeting starting at 7:30 p.m. at which time the Malibu Rotary Club will present the \$3300 scholarship to Fire Fighting Academy student Anthony Marron... .

Malibu Rotary Club Sends 2 Students to RYLA Camp



Malibu Rotary Club President of the Month W. David Baird announced that the Malibu Rotary Club has chosen the 2 local students the Malibu Rotary

Club is sponsoring to attend RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Assembly) Camp at the Alpine Conference Center in Blue Jay, CA in the Big Bear Lake area of San Bernadino Moutains April 21-April 23.

The two students sponsored by the Malibu Rotary Club at this year's RYLA camp are **Morgan Perlmutter** of Malibu High School and **Amir Mohiuddin** of Calabasas High. We hope to have reports from them after their return from the camp.

Guests

There were no guests at the May 3 meeting

Malibu Rotary Club Presidents of the Month (2016-2017)

Malibu Rotary Club President of Record (2016-17) Bill Wishard

August 2016-----Margo Neal

September 2016—David Zielski

October 2016-----John Elman

November 2016—W. David Baird

December 2016—Bill Wishard

January 2017-----Robert "Bob" Syvertsen

February 2017-----John Elman

March 2017-----W. David Baird

April 2017-----Margo Neal

May 2017-----Robert "Bob" Syverstsens

June 2017-----David Zielski

CALENDAR (see up to date calendar on maliburotary.org)

May 10 2017 Malibu Rotary Club Assembly

May 17 2017 Anthony Marron Scholarship Presentation

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The video that Anthony submitted can be seen on the Malibu Rotary Club Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Malibu-188099427908203/>.

June 7 2017 Jeffrey Lipsius Talks about Selling To The Point®

June 21 2017 Kathleen Ronald “Clutternomics, How to Clear Your Way to Profits, Productivity and Peace!!

Kathleen Ronald has more than 30 years of experience providing custom, inspirational keynotes, training seminars and consultancy to Fortune 500 companies, small business, direct sales organizations, and professional associations. She has also appeared on *The Doctor’s* show and *The Dr. Phil* show!. In this session Kathleen will talk about Clutternomics and how clutter affects our lives in a negative way..

Clutter affects 19 areas of your life and business! Organizations are losing tens of thousands, and some cases millions, over a year’s time due to their business clutter and the clutter each of their employees brings in. *In this session: **Discover** why de-cluttering is one of Kathleen’s top business strategies for “instant” abundance; **Learn** “one” easy rule and ‘get back” 7 hours per week; **Explore** the steps to increase your productivity by lowering your work clutter; and **Learn** the “De-Clutter System” to get your life back*

June 28 2017 Demotion Party (Tentative)