



The Award Winning
Malibu Rotary Club Surfwriter

November 6, 2013

Official Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Malibu
Malibu Rotary Club President William Wishard

Edited by Dr. John W. Elman
Pictures by Dr. John W. Elman and Michael Bonewitz

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- **Last Week Meeting: Actress Kimberly Russell and husband Michael Bonewitz, who met on a movie set, find themselves living a real life drama “And Then There Were Eight.”**
 - **Pepperdine Rotaract Club to Start Again Next Semester**

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- **Check [Calendar](#) on Malibu Rotary website MalibuRotary.org**
- **Malibu Rotary Club Website: www.MalibuRotary.org**
- **Rotary International Website: www.Rotary.org**
- **Rotary District 5280 Website: www.rotary5280.org/**
- **Rotary District 5280 “Rotarians Doing Business With Rotarians” Website: <http://yp5280.org/>**
- **RI President (2013-2014) Ron D Burton**
- **Rotary District 5280 Governor (2013-2014): Doug Baker**
- **Assistant Governor for Malibu Rotary Club: Alice Mantean (2013-14)**



**“And
Then
There
Were
Eight”**

Actress Kimberly Russell and husband Michael Bonewitz, who met on a movie set, find themselves living a real life drama “And Then There Were Eight.” Kimberly and her husband already had 3 happy young children at home. The number of children at home grew suddenly to 8 when they agreed to take care of the 5 children of a single mom who died shortly after being diagnosed with lung cancer.

The unexpected new chapter in the lives of the Bonewitz family started innocently enough when Kim was at a PTA meeting in June, 2012. There was one mom there, Marie Jordanou, who looked somewhat ill and Kim knew this single mom was struggling with 5 children. Marie’s children were friends of Kim’s children.

There were leftover refreshments at the PTA meeting, and Kim told Marie that she would put the left overs in a bag so Marie could take them home for her kids. When the meeting ended Marie asked Kim where the left over food items were, and when Kim looked for them they were gone--somebody had thrown them in the trash. Before Kim left she saw Marie foraging through the trash for the bag of left overs. She told Michael about it and he gave Marie money to buy the kids food.

From then on Kim took a special interest in Marie and her family--she could tell Marie did the best she could with her 5 children, which included 9 year old twins, a 10 year old , a 13 year old and a 15 year old.

Marie had been a real estate mortgage broker, but had been unable to work for quite some time because of lung cancer, which progressed ultimately to Stage IV and had metastasized to various organs in her body. Marie’s husband had left her and the kids, and although Marie had sisters, they all lived in Europe and offered no help. Her medical bills had been astronomical, and the family home was in danger of foreclosure. Savings had been exhausted. Kim became friends with Marie and she and Michael tried to help her in any way they could. At this point it was only these PTA friends that offered any help for the physical and emotional burden that consumed her.

Michael, who is a motion picture cameraman and electrician, set up a fundraising concert in February to make more people in the community aware of the Jordanou family predicament help take care of the raising expenses. He and Kim were trying to rescue the family and he started a nonprofit charity and to publicize it website <http://www.jordanourescue.org/>.

Kim tried to stay in regular contact with Marie. When she learned that Marie had been taken to the hospital she went to the hospital. When she arrived at the hospital and explained she was a close family friend she was allowed into an ICU room where Marie was laying, surrounded by the 5 children and a priest. The cancer had metastasized to her brain and she was given 4 days to live. Kim became part of the Jordanou family, and Kim visited Marie everyday in the hospital. While in the hospital Marie asked Kim a favor, "Would you take my children?"

When Kim went home she told David of Marie's request. Kim laughs when she tells us how David balked at an earlier request when she had asked him if they could get a puppy for their 3 children. He talked about having another mouth to feed. And now she was asking him to take in 5 human children. How would he react to that? Well, Michael was adopted and one of the things he loves about Kim is "her big heart." He was expecting it might come to this. And of course-- Yes. He would do it. They would do it. He would do everything in his power to make sure Kim's promise to Marie would be honored. Marie's children would stay together. When you see this couple together you can see how much love and devotion they have for each other and how much love and care they will have for an expanded family.

Marie wanted to live, to take care of her children. She lived another 9 months, beyond that day in the ICU, with Marie trying many things to try to improve her health--a holistic diet, praying in buddhist temples, catholic churches, Jewish temples, with Michael taking her to these places.

At one point doctors decided to surgically remove the tumor from Marie's brain. Before the surgery Marie asked David to take her to a Buddhist Temple to chant, which they did. After doing pre-op blood tests they were told they weren't going to do the surgery.

Kim works as an actress. She was in the academy award winning 2009 movie *Precious*. It is therefore up to Michael to do the bulk of taking care of the kids, although all of the family has to adjust their schedules to accommodate each other.

On November 12th Kim and Michael are going to court to get legal custody of the Jordanou kids

. When asked what their biggest challenges have been Michael said that having the 5 kids who are mourning their mother's passing, and having 3 kids who are now having to share their parents is a challenge, but his kids are generally are happy and smiling, and that happiness is contagious to the other 5.

Michael plays guitar and all the children play musical instruments. Kim said that one day he heard the 10 year old twin boys crying when nobody else was around. When she asked him why he was crying he replied, "I miss my Mom.." He didn't want to cry in front of his brothers and sisters because he wanted to stay strong for them.

Another challenge for Michael and Kim was getting all the kids to school. With 8 kids and driver they had to make multiple trips each day. That particular problem was solved when they were able to purchase a used 10 passenger van.

On the Joradaou Rescue website Michael explains that he started the non-profit organization Jordanou Rescue to help not only Maria, but other single parent cancer victims with kids, who need help beyond what medical treatment can offer:

Why We Do It

"Compassion; to witness a friend or neighbor carrying the burden of financial hardship, all alone and with mouths to feed is tough enough. Now add to that a diagnosis of very serious cancer. The weight of which must be crushing and our hearts can only go out to that friend or neighbor. It's difficult to imagine what it must be like to suffer from possibly terminal cancer, undergoing debilitating therapy treatments while fighting every day for your life and praying that this will not be the last time you say goodbye to your young children. Couple this with all the everyday domestic and parental duties, the inability to work or even get up and it is obvious help is greatly needed. We do it because, how could we not? We do it because we believe someone would do it for us. We do it because we are human. We do it because a single parent with cancer cannot do it by themselves. Compassion, sympathy, simple human dignity, these are basic motivating factors that drive us to provide aid to others."



Bonewitz Blended Family--Front row left to right: Stasi, Spirit, Niki. Second row: Ari, True, Joy, Ariana, Athina. Back row: Michael & Kimberly.

Happy dollars

Malibu Rotary Club President **Bill Wishard** had initiated an new tradition at the Malibu Rotary Club--raising money for Malibu Rotary club charities (or Rotary Foundation) while people at the meeting tell happy news about events in their life while throwing dollars into the basket--kind of like "fines" in other clubs--raising money for happy events. Bill through in the first dollars for helping start a new Psi Upsilon chapter at San Diego State University. Bill we know was a member of the fraternity at Williams College, and helped start and has been an adviser for the Pepperdine Chapter. **David Zielski** through in his dollars because his non-profit RainCatchers signed a new lease for a headquarters office in Malibu, **David Baird** contributed because his book on the history of Oklahoma is on the Best Sellers list at the University of Oklahoma, guest speaker **Kim Russell** contributed because she was able to get concert tickets for teenage daughter for daughter's favorite artist on the daughter's birthday

Pepperdine Rotaract Club to Start Again Next Semester

We learned a couple weeks ago **David Baird** has agreed to be the faculty sponsor of the Pepperdine Rotaract Club. At the Malibu Rotary Club meeting November 6 David introduced two of the students who will be leaders of the new club--Pepperdine Sophomore **Madison Lea** and freshman **Melissa Miller**. Madison is from Arlington, Texas and is quite familiar with Rotary. Besides being an officer in her high school Interact Club Madison was a Rotary Youth Exchange Student to Chile. In addition, her father is Past President of the Rotary Club in Arlington. It is hoped that the Pepperdine Rotaract club will be established by next semester and enjoy the success it had several years ago when it was a top campus club.

Malibu Rotarians Attending the November 9 Rotary Foundation Paul Harris Dinner Under the Wings of the Endeavor Space Shuttle at the California Science Center in Los Angeles

Even while he was recouping from his recent heart surgery Malibu Rotary Club President Bill Wishard was trying to make sure that those people who wanted to attend the sold out November 9th Rotary Foundation Dinner at the California Science Center were able to get in.

Early reservations had been made at table for 6 under the wings of the Space Shuttle Endeavor for **Margo Neal, Lavern Schenkelberg, Hubert Luckerath, David Baird, Pompeya Monteros** and **Bill**. Bill was able to free up some more space by volunteering himself and **Jimmy Mehmon Mon** to work at the event and become part of the staff. Malibu Rotary's

hosted Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar **Livia Giordana** and member **Peter Formosa** and wife **Sally** also wanted to attend. Bill explains in this last minute e-mail how he got everyone in when Pompeya said she was still in Ecuador:

Livia will be attending, sitting at the LA5 table next to Pau Netzel and his wife.

I just heard via family network: Pompeya did not come home in time for our granddaughter's birthday (11-08-13), her grandson Enzo' s birthday (11-02-13) and her gift to him of attending the Endeavor Rotary event with her, all rare for her, because Quito Rotary dinner is paying some honor to her for her Rotary work there this weekend. Certainly worthy of a report to our club when she returns, possibly a speaker after I talk to her later. Social family events keep any one from bringing Enzo Guerra, so

Peter and Sally Formosa will take the seats of Pompeya and Enzo I am happy to report.

I will be working and eating with staff of the event, along with Mehm Mon.

9 from Malibu club here, 1 in Quito, 10 participating one way or another, not too bad attendance.

Guests at Last Malibu Rotary Club Meeting

Guests at the November 6 meeting of the Malibu Rotary Club included two past Presidents of the Malibu Rotary Club **Dennis Torres** and **Rex Levi**. Dennis heads the Real Estate operation of Pepperdine University and also teaches a class in Dispute Resolution. Rex also works in the Pepperdine Real Estate office and among other things is a ship captain and used to teach sailing at Pepperdine. Dennis presided over the glory years of the Malibu Rotary Club when it had a membership as high as 50. There is a plaque on a rock in Bluffs Park put there when the Malibu Rotary Club planted trees in the park under Dennis' leadership. While in the Malibu Rotary Club Rex led a Rotary Group Study Exchange to Brunei and initiated the annual Malibu Rotary Club Middle and High School Singing Competition--one of the club's most entertaining annual events. Dennis introduced **Christine Garcia**, who is his assistant in the real estate office as well as teaching assistant in the class he teaches.

Journalist **Ashleigh Fryer** was also at the meeting, doing a story for the newly revived *Malibu Surfside News* on our speakers Kim and Michael. Since *Malibu Surfside News* founder and editor Ann Soble's illness the paper wasn't published until 4 weeks ago. Now 22nd Century Media, a publisher in Illinois has taken over, and changed much of the formerly family run paper. Ashleigh is part of the new staff after getting a degree in journalism from Boston University.

Returning guests at the Malibu Rotary Club meeting included **Cindra Ranieri** who is now working with Veera at the Malibu Chronicle and **Yvonne Gelbman**.

Malibu Rotary Club Holiday Party December 11, 2013

Maggie Luckerath has worked with Bill Krenz for a place and menu for the Malibu Rotary Club Annual Holiday Party to be held at 6:00 p.m. at the Malibu West Clubhouse, on the beach at the corner of Trancas and PCH in Malibu

Price of \$35.00/person not including alcohol BYOB includes the following dinner menu and amenities:

Besides a personal RSVP to Maggie at Malibu Rotary Club, e-mail or phone call, and giving check to Hubert for \$35.00 per person, you can also RSVP for you and your guest(s) on www.Maliburotary.org and mail check.

Karen Farrer and Advocates for Malibu Public Schools at Malibu Rotary Club Meeting November 13, 2013

Please join us for an informational presentation from Advocates for Malibu Public Schools (AMPS) about the movement toward an independent, locally controlled Malibu Unified School District.

Much progress has been made to date. Come learn about the process, the timeline and the benefits of forming and controlling our own school district.

Please bring your questions, concerns, ideas. Hoping you can attend and learn more about AMPS.

Editor's note: Neither the editor of the Malibu Rotary Club Surfwriter nor the Malibu Rotary Club takes a position on the separation of the district but are for open debate and providing a public forum so the facts can be stated by all parties involved.

Please see Malibu Rotary Club Website www.maliburotary.org for latest Calendar and future speakers and facebook pages for other news.

Like Rotary Club of Malibu on 

Calendar

(All Malibu Rotary Club meetings are at 12:00 Noon in LC 152 at the Pepperdine Drescher campus Villa Graziadio Executive Center unless otherwise noted)

Nov 13, 2013

[Karen Farrer](#)

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Nov 20, 2013

Susanna Brisk
"Malibu Mom"

Author, actor and blogger Susanna Brisk, will stop by to discuss her book "I'll Be The Death of Me." A funny, raw and searingly honest memoir, Susanna will address topics including parenting with a mental illness, surviving your family of origin and finding your creative self, even while there are small people in your midst who require lunch.

For more information about Susanna and her book visit www.malibumom.com and <http://amzn.to/13y1tjq>.

November 21, 2013

**Malibu Rotary Club Sponsors Thanksgiving Dinner for Homeless with SOS at
Webster Elementary School 6:00 p.m.**

Malibu Rotarians prepare and serve dinner for homeless in conjunction with SOS at John L Webster Elementary School, 3602 Winter Canyon Road, Malibu, CA 90265.

Dec 11, 2013

Malibu Rotary Club Holiday Party (no meeting at noon)

"Evening Holiday Party at Malibu West Club House PCH at Trancas in Malibu (no meeting at noon)"

Dec 25, 2013

Christmas Holiday (no meeting)

"Christmas Holiday (no meeting)"

Jan 01, 2014

Happy New Year (no Rotary meeting)

"Watch the Rotary Float in the Rose Parade"

Jan 14, 2014

To Be Announced

"Rotary District Breakfast"

District 5280 Breakfasts are held at the Westin LAX Hotel, 5400 W. Century Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90045. Registration opens at 7:00 a.m. Free self-parking is available in the hotel parking structure. Valet parking at Westin Hotel rates.

Jan 15, 2014

Malibu Rotary Hi School Singing Competition at Pepperdine Stauffer Chappel at 6:00 p.m.

