

ROTARY SPOKES

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Dr. Mel Cheatham: “The Gathering Storm”

It's always a pleasure to hear from our very own Melvin L. Cheatham – neurosurgeon, member of the Board of Directors of Samaritan's Purse and of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Clinical Professor of Neurosurgery at the University of California (Los Angeles) Medical Center, and, most importantly, humanitarian. Dr. Cheatham gave up his very successful neurosurgical practice so that he and his wife of 55 years, Sylvia, could volunteer their time doing relief work around the world through World Medical Mission, the medical arm of Samaritan's Purse.

Dr. Cheatham speaks nationally and internationally on humanitarian relief work and is special assistant to Dr. Franklin Graham, President of Samaritan's Purse. He is the author of four books: “Come Walk With Me,” “Living A Life That Counts,” “New Every Morning,” and “Make A Difference,” each book focusing upon our need to bring humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations of the world, has received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree and is past President of the California State Neurosurgical Society and a past President of the Western Neurosurgical Society as well as co-editor of an internationally renowned surgical textbook. It's no surprise that he has received prestigious awards from both the American and California Associations of Neurological Surgeons.

Both Mel and Sylvia are proud members of the Rotary Club of Ventura who have devoted the last 28 years to serving those less fortunate around the world. They were jointly awarded Rotary District 5240 “Humanitarian of the Year” Award by former Governor Deepa Willingham. The Cheatham's have performed surgery to save the lives of wounded and suffering people around the world – often in the most war-torn and poverty-stricken nations. In the 1990s Mel trained Sylvia as his surgical assistant. With her at his side, he has worked in over 40 nations around the globe including Bosnia, Croatia, Rwanda, Kosovo, Somalia, Zaire, Uganda, Kenya, Korea, Siberia, and Sudan.



Dr. Melvin and Sylvia Cheatham, pose for a photo with President George H.W. Bush, his wife, Barbara, and President Jimmy Carter.

In the spring of 2010, Mel Cheatham worked with Franklin Graham, the eldest son of Dr. Billy Graham, in responding to the earthquake in Haiti with a rapid-response medical team. Dr. Cheatham leaves next week on his 21st diplomatic visit to the DPRK (North Korea). This closed society on the northern side of the 38th parallel is steeped in suspicion, paranoia and blind devotion to their late Great Leader, Kim Il Sung. Yet in his many visits to North Korea, Dr. Cheatham has cultivated a vital relationship that has improved communication between the governments of our two countries while also supplying vitally needed medical supplies and equipment.

A personal thought frequently expressed by Dr. Cheatham as he speaks nationally and internationally is that, “Life becomes full when you begin to give it away.” With this as a personal philosophy, coupled with their strong Christian faith, Mel and Sylvia Cheatham continue to live their lives as medical and diplomatic volunteers, at work in a world of incredible need and of ever-present danger.

This story was originally published in the Ventura Breeze September 7, 2011.

Recap of June 04 Meeting

Bill Kearney began proceedings with an acknowledgement to the elected officials among our members. Staci Johnson and RoseAnn Hill led the club in 'Smile.' Staci also distributed the posters for the Fourth of July event, while Curtis Cormane appealed for more volunteers. Outgoing Rotaract President Jen Livia invited club members to her Step Up Step Down Celebration, Mon, July 7, 6:30pm–7:30pm at the Wedgewood Banquet Hall, 5880 Olivas Park Dr. The Club is also planning to build a house in one day in Mexico this summer.

A plethora of Paul Harris Fellowships were distributed to deserving members, including Mary Kay Doubek, Mary Saputo, Doug Halter and Randy Encinas, all for their generosity for Rotary Club events.

Program

The Annual Ventura High School Interact Bake Sale was a boisterous affair yet again with cupcakes, cheesecakes, and many other pastries being bought by generous Rotarians and Rotaractors. One cake went for a dizzying \$1,760.00 much to the delight of the students. Todd Binley returned to the club as our auctioneer and sold off cakes baked and decorated by the students with much assistance from Courtney Lindberg, Doug Halter and Randy Encinas.

The total Sale yielded \$2,780.00 for the Interact Club, which helps fund events like outings, a dance for special-needs students and helping Rotary with the Childrens Christmas Party

Today's Program *"The Gathering Storm"* *with Dr. Mel Cheatham*

Introductions:	Jim Deardorff
Rotary Moment:	John Brant
Fining:	Hutch Hutchinson

Future Programs

Jun 17	Demotion Party (DARK Jun. 18)
Jun 25	Bruce Stenslie. Economic Update
Jul 02	DARK



Steve Bradvica, Chris Brashears, John Brant and Dan Holmes pose with an Interactor and her cake.



The group of Ventura High School Interactors each spoke about what they enjoy about the club. Proceeds from the bake sale go to fund club projects and activities.



Staci Johnson and RoseAnn Hill belt out 'Smile' while Bill Kearney looks on.



Doug Halter receives his Paul Harris Fellowship as Courtney Lindberg and Randy Encinas watch.



Christina Rust congratulates Mary Saputo on her Paul Harris Fellowship.



Curtis Cormane had the honor to award Mary Kay Doubek her first Paul Harris Fellowship.



Rotaractor James Panagoti makes an announcement of an upcoming event.



Jen Livia, outgoing Rotaract President, shares some upcoming club events.



Roz Warner and Saurabh Bajaj pose with some expensive pastries. Auctioneer Todd Binkley kept the pace lively!



Ellyn Dembowski poses with the cake she bought as well as the Interact baker himself.

Erratum:


In last weeks Recap of the May 28 meeting, it was suggested that one of the Phoenix Award recipients had suffered from alcoholism. This couldn't be further from the truth and the editor apologizes for any misunderstanding

June Birthdays

Jeffrey Lambert, Jun 03
Larry Emrich, Jun 09
Warren Lovell, Jun 13
Hank Chandler, Jun 14
Jack Wood, Jun 15
Curtis Cormane, Jun 22
Rosa Lee Measures, Jun 25

June Anniversaries

SusAnne Chung, Jun 01
Hank Chandler, Jun 06,
Roger Case, Jun 07
Lynda Girtsman, Jun 07
Jeffrey Lambert, Jun 10
Kristin Taylor, Jun 13
Andrew Soter, Jun 16
John McConica II, Jun 25
Dick Hatcher, Jun 26
Saurabh Bajaj, Jun 28
Larry Rasmussen, Jun 30

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