



SUMMER Weekly

Reader

Volume 202, Issue 267, June 15th, 2017

The Plano Rotary Club
www.PlanoRotary.com

RETINA SCREENS FOR EYEPADS

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Jun 15

Rick Horne & David McWhorter
Blues, Brews & Que Preview & Finalization

Jun 22

Karen Voelker
City House

Jun 29

David McWhorter
*President's Final Meeting/
Incoming New Officers*

Jul 6

NO NOON MEETING
Due to Holiday Week



JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Jeff Frauenheim	June 01
Charles Milby	June 07
Blair Ritchey	June 08
Mark Waterbury	June 08
Mark Geller	June 09
Bradley Keith	June 12
Bob Bauer	June 19



Sainted Editor welcomes **Mike Booher** to the rank of Photographer 2nd Class. This *Weekly Reader* is his debut performance on the camera (my *Sony Point'n'Shoot*, not his). Be sure to encourage him; we need to seduce him to improve "depth on the bench," as **Randy Wright** used to say.

King David anointed the heads of the faithful at 12:13, imperiously denoting **Blair Ritchey** as High Priest and **Justin Roche** as Allegiance Leader. **Maria Mott** was Greeter. And **SERGEANT KRAMER** arose to thunderous ovation.

JASON announced a Visiting Rotarian, **Janet Holland**, but **CAPTAIN KIRK** arose to augment the announcement with her pedigree: Past District Governor of 5790. Jason fined him \$5 for egregious usurpation of the Sergeant's Prerogatives.



Jerry Kezhaya fed wife, **Laura**, today, here to monitor his **3 MINUTES OF FAME**.

Jerry then launched into that, telling us that he's more than meets the eye on the *Weekly Reader's* back page. He and Laura actually own half a dozen businesses, but he chose today to emphasize his AA credentials.

He has put his coquettishly quaint "wine fetish" to remunerative advantage, producing Napa valley Cabernets (Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc). In the process, he has become a Certified Sommelier (and habitual drinker; perhaps that explains his ruddy com-



plexion). He interrupted his soliloquy to gift **King David** with a bottle of the fruit of his vines, or rather his supplier's vines, for he and Laura journey to California to gather up grapes from Napa vineyards. They are blended to his tastes, bottled, labeled, set to age, then drunk with a passion. (This sets a bad precedent for the rest of us, Jerry. What am I supposed to do when my turn comes? Bestow an Honorary Doctorate?)

This consumes him but not enough to impede his garnering of a 1999 **Small** (have they seen his girth?) Businessman of the Year from the *Plano Chamber of Commerce*, and the 2005 Texas Environmental Business of the Year for his carwash water reclamation practices. He wastes only 3 gallons of water to wash a vehicle! His reclamation involves 3 μ filtration followed by UV and ozonation.

His daughter has recently moved back from Beirut where she was visiting relatives (Lebanon is Jerry's ancestral home) and where she has finished her Master's at the prestigious *American University* there. His son is doing well in Austin, and "I've used up my **3 MINUTES**."

King David drew and announced **Justin Roche** next week's victim. Then he thanked Jerry opining that oenology might prove interesting as a possible program. Jerry concurred.

Rick Horne wished to recognize "TV personalities," **Camille Ussery** and **Mary Jo Dean**, for their performance in the Great

continued on page 2



All-Access Playground Interview Program. He concluded that “*great recognition*” was garnered for the “*caring and giving Rotarians*” that we are.

King David conceded that the email about the imminent deadline for 5810 award applications failed to disclose the list of awards for which we may wish to apply. “*I’m not the most technically proficient.*” He’s concerned because last year *Park Cities* walked away with the awards because we had applied for only two! The list of both individual and Club awards will be sent around next week. He reminded us that Kirk won President of the Year a while back, and that trophy would look pretty good on his mantle.

He also noted the requirement for the incoming Board to meet with the outgoing one at the meeting next Thursday morning.

SPIRITWARE Feigenbaum trudged to the podium, dreading his speaker introduction. Today’s speaker, **Dr. Sai H. Chavala**, is a **vitreoretinal** surgeon dealing with all things **ophthalmological**. And Alan struggled so with those pronunciations that someone cruel suggested he needed corrective lenses. He was reduced to calling it “*eye stuff*.” Dr. Chavala cut him some slack when we didn’t.

Dr. Sai Chavala, is a fellowship-trained retina specialist and serves as the Director of Retina Services at *Kleiman|Evangelista Eye Center*. As a board-certified retina surgeon, Dr. Chavala is passionate about combining his retinal experience with the latest technology and innovative treatment options to help patients with retinal disease and vision loss.

Dr. Chavala specializes in retina and vitreous surgery, macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and retinal vein occlusion. Dr. Sai Chavala graduated from the *University of Missouri* in an accelerated program with his bachelor’s and medical degrees. He completed his residency in ophthalmology at the *Cole Eye Institute Cleveland Clinic Foundation* and a research fellowship in stem cells and regenerative medicine at the *Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Weill Medical College of Cornell University*. Dr. Chavala then completed a fellowship in surgical retina at *Duke University*. He later served as an Assistant Professor at the *University of North Carolina*, where he taught the latest techniques in retinal surgery to ophthalmologists in training.

Dr. Chavala currently serves as a tenured, full Professor at the *North Texas Eye Research Institute* at the *University of North Texas Health Science Center* in Fort Worth. There he leads a NIH funded research laboratory focused on stem cell approaches to repair and regenerate the retina.

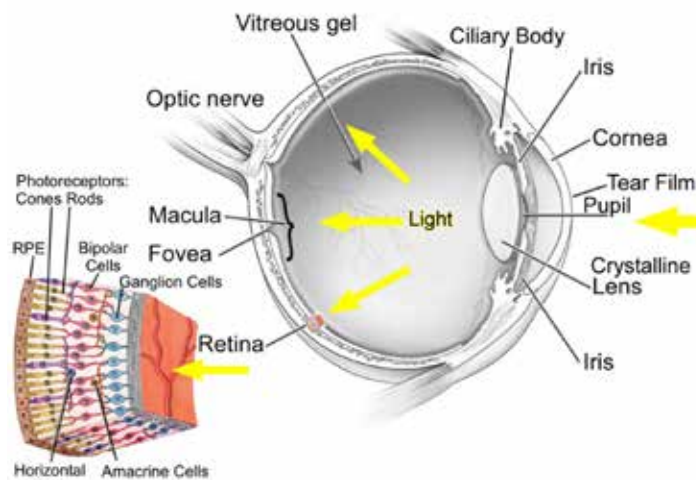
He has led or participated in more than 75 scholarly presentations, research publications and patents, and is heavily dedicated to several philanthropic activities. He is a member of the *American Academy of Ophthalmology*, *Texas Medical Association*, *American Society of Retina Specialists*, *Tarrant County Medical Association*, *Retinal Society*, and *Macula Society*, among others.

Dr. Chavala regaled us with photos of glowering wives and daughters; they had just learned they were to be uprooted from UNC and transplanted to TX. Woe is them! But he regarded it as a “*once in a lifetime opportunity*,”

not to be missed, and so not missed. They’ve since come around. The wife must have forgiven him because their second child was born in Houston.

Dr. Chavala suffers from a self-diagnosed Multiple Personality Disorder; he’s a clinician, a surgeon, and a researcher. He works on next generation cures for retinal degeneration, and he’s grateful for our tax dollars. But he won’t be grateful long; NIH funding is dwindling under the current administration.

Then he played us a slick advertisement promoting the good work of vision institutes. It was modeled upon the cheerful scenes reminiscent of TV drug commercials but without the litany of lethal side effects. It went to show that Dr. Chavala wants to “*improve the quality of Life*” rather than its *quantity*, the goal of most physicians.



He presented us with a cross-section of the human eyeball, pointing out the pixelated membrane at the back, the retina, which records the image focused by the lens. On an image of the retina, he identified the macula, the center of vision that constitutes our 20:20 spot and the blind spot where the optic nerve exits the eye, “*like a cable on a TV*,” except that the signal’s running the other direction. He spoke of various malfunctions of the retina, some genetic like *retinitis pigmentosa*, e.g., night blindness.

The scariest, perhaps, is macular degeneration, for which there is “no FDA approved therapy.” This is a disaster that happens in the worst spot possible, the center of vision. Dr. Chavala spoke of the frustration at watching the progression of blindness and being unable to repair it.

The retinal pigment epithelium (the RPE layer in the graphic’s insert) dies first and the photoreceptors follow. Research on a cure is following four lines of inquiry:

1. Prevention of photoreceptor death (not yet ready)
2. Replacement of lost retinal cells
3. Re-engineering the retina to repair itself (like amphibians regenerating lost limbs)
4. Converting non-sensitive cells into sensitive ones.

Since a cure is so difficult, prevention is best. For genetic diseases, one could, in principle, find the genetic defect and replace it by engineering a virus to infect the cells with the cure. That would be woefully expensive.

Alternatively, one might employ stem cell therapy where one inserts embryonic, undifferentiated cells into the damaged tissues to have them take the signal from their location to convert into new, healthy tissue. Such a cure probably has a five year horizon.

There are trials underway to do just that. A recent article in *The Lancet* shows neither tissue rejection nor tumor growth. But there are religious and political objections to the use of embryonic stem cells because they are taking from an oocyte which has the potential of becoming a human being. There is the scientific objection of tissue rejection as well.

Instead, one might take skin fibroblasts and convince them to change their identity! Trials with mice suggest it is possible to grow RPE cells by applying a “viral gene cocktail” to their own skin cells. Analysis of brain activity in the visual cortex (using ERG) suggests that the process has worked. This chemically-induced RPE plus working photoreceptors might regenerate sight in two weeks. (One wonders if they used three blind mice in their studies?)

The next problem to tackle is glaucoma via the retinal ganglia cells.

It is possible to use the healthy cells as “factories” to produce additional new cells to replace the dead or damaged ones. When one “turns on the genes” for self-repair, electrical activity in the visual cortex renews in about a month and is nearly back to normal after three months. It’s almost “ready for primetime.”

In response to a question by **Chief Greif**, Dr. Chavala said that there is funding now but “NIH budgets are going away.” Perhaps it will be replaced by “outside funding.”

King David proved he was paying attention by commenting that only at a Rotary seminar can one “talk about cocktails without being at a bar.” Then he gifted Dr. Chavala and his publicist, **Harper Zeno**, with our high tech desk organizer. After reminding us that the **Blues, Brews, and ‘Ques** event is a week from Saturday on June 17, he led us in the Four-Way Test and washed his hands of us at 1:00.



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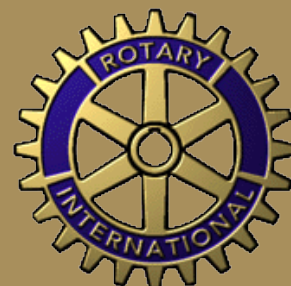
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