



ROTARY CLUB of La Jolla

BITS of News

06.14.24

**Coming next Tuesday, June 18th,
Drs. Paul Courtright and Susan Lewallen**

The Vision that's Changing Lives



When **Susan Lewallen** and **Paul Courtright** married in 1988, they shared a dream of making a difference in the world while living, working and raising a family overseas.

Shortly after their marriage, the couple began their journey in earnest and moved from the U.S. to Africa to help address rampant blindness there. At the time, eighty percent of blindness in Africa could be prevented with medical care, as, the leading cause for blindness was cataracts, a condition that is routinely cured through surgery in America.



Susan Lewallen is an ophthalmologist. She did her medical training and ophthalmology residency at the University of Colorado. Between medical school and residency, she spent a year working

and traveling through the South Pacific. Following ophthalmology residency she worked for one year in St. Kitts (Caribbean). She did a fellowship in external eye disease at the Proctor Foundation (UCSF), where she met and married Dr. Paul Courtright.

Paul Courtright is a graduate of Boise State University (BA 1978), John Hopkins (MPH 1985), and Univ of California Berkeley (DrPH 1988). He served as a US Peace Corps volunteer in South Korea from 1979-81, working in a leprosy resettlement village, undertaking a project to reach all leprosy resettlement villages in the country with eye care. His specialty was Public Health, focusing on epidemiology and eye diseases.

Together with Susan, beginning in 1988, Paul has spent his career in Africa and Asia, spending 1 year each in Egypt and Ethiopia, 4 years each in Malawi and South Africa and over 11 years in Tanzania.

In 2001, after having achieved some ophthalmological success in Malawi, Paul and Susan launched the **Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology** (www.kcco.net) in Moshi, Tanzania. Since then, KCCO has grown to be one of the biggest providers of research and high-quality eye care training in Africa. Located in Moshi, a small city near Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, KCCO has a full-time Tanzanian faculty and staff. KCCO's programs today are improving eye care services throughout eastern Africa, a region with 210 million people in 18 countries spanning from Egypt to South Africa.

In 2008, Susan and Paul were presented with the prestigious **International Blindness Prevention Award** from the **American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO)**, the world's largest association of eye physicians and surgeons. It was the only time in 30 years that the award was given to co-winners, a fitting honor for two doctors who realized a dream.

Between them academically, they have authored 450 scientific papers and three books. They remain on Kilimanjaro Centre's board of directors, although

locals primarily manage it now. They both are on the **University of Cape Town, South Africa**, faculty and often travel to Africa. Now 70, the two are semi-retired and living in Rancho Bernardo. They have two adult sons who were raised in Africa, a daughter-in-law and a grandson, all currently living in Africa.



Please RSVP to Natasha Vossen's email re: our next luncheon on June 18 to nataschavossen@san.rr.com

Last Week's Meeting Highlights



President Barbara Brown opened the Meeting.



And **John Donaldson** led the **Pledge of Allegiance** and offered the following Inspirations.

"Peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of creative alternatives for responding to conflict."

Dorothy Thompson

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

Romans 12:18

Visiting Rotarians

Cal Mann, our long-time esteemed former member of the La Jolla Rotary Club and a current Honorary Rotarian, expressed his appreciation for the warmth and collegiality of our club and shared with us his adventures at another Rotary club he had visited during his time in London, **The Battersea Rotary club**.

The Brits at Battersea dispatched their business meeting in less than an hour and then followed with 7 hearty hours of alcoholic libations. Cal brought us their banner as proof of his incredulous and wary attendance.



Nora Allen is a long-standing member of the **Coronado Rotary Club**. She has served as Chair of their Care and Concern Committee for 12 years.

Nora has recently taken a job at **Scripps Health Foundation**. She is interested in transferring her membership to our club.

Happy Bucks

Bob Pecora offered **\$20.00** to celebrate his mother's 90th Birthday. He also expressed his enthusiasm at having interviewed high school students for scholarships and recommended others volunteer for this job next year.



Don Lincoln offered **\$20.00 in Happy Bucks** on learning his son **Don Lincoln** recently qualified to represent the USA in the 2025 World Triathlon. The USA Triathlon is the governing body of the sport of triathlon in the USA, part of the overall Olympic Committee, making USAT officially part of Team USA. Don's son has already qualified for the 2024 World Triathlon, which will be held this August in Australia.

Davis Cracraft suddenly took the podium and fined **President Barbara Brown \$50.00** for having her picture published in the **Union Tribune** under the byline, "*Someone you need to know*" He further noted there was yet another story and series of photographs of her in "**Discover La Jolla**".



John Donaldson then stood up and offered **\$100.00 in Happy Bucks** in celebration of Barbara's recent notoriety with **David Shaw and Cal Mann** followed suit, each offering **\$50.00** making it a grand slam total of **\$250.00 in fines and Happy Bucks.**

Announcements



Anya Singleton, our International Service Chair, announced our \$5,000 Grant, matched by the **San Diego Rotary Foundation** to assist the Eye Clinic in India to buy furniture and medical instruments. Our gift was formally acknowledged and toasted by the **Indian Rotary Club of Cochin** last week.

Cindy Goodman, our Fundraiser Extraordinaire announced everything was on track for the Alison Brown Concert, and since time was short the board agreed to reduce all remaining seats to \$175.00, so that some of Alison's friends could also attend.



The Don Dewhurst Rotarian of the year Award. Charles Marsh Jr.

Patrick Stouffer announced this year's prestigious award would go to **Charles Marsh Jr.**, a long time Rotarian first in Palo Alto California, for 20 years where he served as President, and here in La Jolla for over 10 years.

Chuck served our La Jolla club and board for several years as Secretary and began “**The Weekly Bits Newsletter**” to serve our members during the Covid shutdown. He is currently in the process of redesigning our club website to make it both more attractive and usable for the membership as well as those interested in joining our club. Chuck has spent many many hours toiling for this club and well deserves to be named our Rotarian of the Year.



The Proud winner, **Chuck Marsh** with **Cal Mann** a previous recipient of the Rotarian of the year Award.

Our Speakers Last Week

Scripps Health Julie Mathew and Nora Allen with President Barbara Brown

“Here for Good, 100 years of Caring”



Rotarian Davis Cracraft, a former medical director of **Scripps Mercy Hospital** introduced last week’s speakers **Julie Mathew** and **Nora Allen**, stating, we are blessed in San Diego to live in an environment rich in competitive medical services. Primarily, San Diego is served by four major health systems: **Kaiser Permanente; Sharp HealthCare; Scripps Health;**

and University of California, San Diego (UCSD) Health. Each has had its own unique source of funding.

For **Scripps Health** a non-for-profit, financial margins have been historically low. In the past, profit margins have been at the 1 to 2 percent level. Recently this has changed to .5 % due to several factors.

First, patient health insurance payments have been sharply reduced over the years. Second, California requires that Scripps absorb the cost of all charitable care, or approximately 8 million dollars a year, and third and likely the greatest expense, California law has mandated all hospitals within the state be replaced or retrofitted to be able absorb **an 8.4 earthquake**. For most hospitals, this means replacing the hospitals as the cost of retrofitting often is far more expensive.

All of this has meant, Scripps financial health has only been able to survive through only two sources, institutional investment, and generous community-based philanthropy.

It is the latter that has brought about their recent 10 year funding drive, “**Here for Good, 100 years of Caring**” a \$500 million, campaign aimed at funding systemwide expansion which will fulfill California’s earthquake mandate, and ensure Scripps will be prepared to institute expanded treatment and care outcomes, new discoveries and pioneering plans to truly make a difference in the health and quality of life for the San Diego community.

For North County it means the expansion of **Scripps Encinitas Hospital** starting this summer, and the construction of the **Lusardi Tower**, a state-of-the-art, 185,000 square foot hospital building expected to be completed in 2025. Its focus will be on pulmonary health as well as a mother baby unit in the main hospital which will add



postpartum beds to serve the growing number of families in North County. All hospital rooms will be single room suites.

For **Scripps Mercy Hospital**, it means a new medical pavilion with operating rooms, primary and specialty physician offices, imaging and other outpatient services. It is expected to open in 2025. The Scripps Mercy campus will also be home to a new hospital tower with private patient rooms, an intensive care unit, state-of-the-art radiological and surgical suites, and women's services, including labor and delivery and a neonatal intensive care unit. Again, all hospital rooms again will be single unit rooms.



For **Scripps Cancer Center** it means Expansion of Scripps Cancer Center's John J. Hopkins location on the Torrey Pines Mesa

Finally at **Scripps Memorial La Jolla**, Construction is under way on a new seven-story hospital tower connected to Prebys Cardiovascular Institute. Once completed, hopefully in the summer of 2025, the tower will contain four medical/surgical floors with observation bays, radiology imaging suites and nine operating rooms, all with state-of-the-art equipment. The tower will also house a dedicated women's center with single unit hospital rooms.



Note: No name has been chosen for the **Scripps Memorial Tower** yet. For those who wish to be fondly remembered by the citizens of San Diego, they will need to dig deep, as putting your name on this building will require a donation of \$100 Million.

Our Speaker in Two weeks

Jesse Imbriano, Supervising attorney at Casa Cornelia who will speak on Immigration, Asylum, and the Border.



Reminder:

On **June 27th**, we will be working with **Club 33** to distribute food to military families at the **Armed Services YMCA**. If you'd like to participate, please let **Vince Glorioso** know so that he can provide a final count one week before the event. He will be emailing you with the details.