

SERVICE ABOVE SELF

Claremont Rotary Year 92 | Week 5 | July 31, 2020

Program: Kendall Johnson, Chaos & Ash

Dr. Ken Johnson is known to us in the club by his past presentations as an artist and as Susie Ilsley's husband but Friday we got to know him as an author as he read selections from his new book *Chaos & Ash*, available August 1, published by Pelekinesis Press.

Susie introduced Ken from their mutual zoom screen as a former firefighter with military experience who served as a traumatic stress consultant often in the field. Ken has lectured in fire houses, hospitals, emergency service institutes, conferences, government training facilities, universities, here and abroad. Dr. Johnson was Adjunct Faculty member at the California State Training Institute (Governor's Office of Emergency Services), served on the Faculty of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, and was Associate Professor in the Master's Degree program in Emergency Services Management at California State University, Long Beach. He has authored a number of professional papers, seven books in the treatment of traumatic stress, school crisis management, and recovery. Recently Ken retired from teaching to pursue painting, photography, and writing. In that capacity he has written five literary books of artwork and poetry, and one in art history.

Chaos & Ash is about his extreme life experiences in disaster and recovery as a firefighter and traumatic stress consultant. Ken started by reading an excerpt called "First Firefight" that took place in Santa Barbara in 1964. (pp. 13-14 Pelekinesis. Kindle Edition.)

We are setting up to protect houses in an oak-covered canyon at night, and our hose defenses are in place. It had been insane so far. We'd almost gotten cooked twice, and the fire had burned right through our fire camp. Now we are getting ready to save these homes built in an indefensible tunnel of trees their owners thought would never burn. It comes like a screaming red tornado. The flames are thirty or forty feet high as the preheated brush and scrub oak nearly explodes. In a minute the entire uphill side is burning, and sparks and burning debris cascade down to the other side. I alternate hitting the spots below me with a straight

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CHAOIS & ASH



ANOTHER FIRST
Rotary International
has nominated it's first
female to be president,
in 2022-23, Jennifer
Jones, of Ontario, CAN.



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NEXT PROGRAM: Friday, August 7, we'll hear from Grant Gershon, conductor of the LA Master Chorale. Please join us on Zoom for the meeting, which begins with music just before noon and fellowship at noon.
<https://kgi.zoom.us/j/5977425915>

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ROTARY, THE MEETING

Picture this: If you snuck into the meeting early, you could see Don Gould playing Graceful Ghost Rag (by William Bolcom) on the piano ([on YouTube](#)) as people joined the meeting. Once we were all safely in the room, President Buff sent us away into Breakout Rooms to consider some questions: Some of us are big talkers and some are happy being listeners. Which are you? What did you like best about the in-person meetings? The food? The hugs? The table talk? Getting out of the house or office? The SINGING??? What can we do to improve our experience on zoom?



Break-out Room Chatter: Discussion in the Breakout Rooms brought praise for the One way to bring in music to our singing club is with a pre-recorded performances. Other comments: the longer breakout sessions allow for something more than pleasantries and the weather—and everyone gets involved, which members appreciate. Someone's group thought we needed more jokes, so Ron Coleman jumped in to plug the gap. We miss eating! (together) We miss being able to visit with the group at our table, and also with the larger group. The breakout room group size (5-7) seems about right, by all accounts.

WELCOME GUESTS

Roger House introduced his guest **Nelson Dodge, Dean of the Los Angeles Chapter of the American Guild of Organists**, who expressed appreciation for Claremont Rotary's continuing support of the organ scholarships. The organ scholarship began in 2015-16, when Roger was Claremont Rotary President, and has been an annual budget commitment since then. Nelson provided welcome information that his Board voted to augment our fund with an additional \$2250 from their budget. The current crop of students is delayed for now, but as soon as it is safe to proceed, their studies will get underway with the planned financial support. Nelson is ending his two-year term as Dean of the LA Chapter, but was recently elected to another term, so we'll be working with him for another two years. In place of the biennial AGO national convention in Atlanta, cancelled because of the pandemic, they held a weeklong online festival with live streaming music every night—it ended a couple of weeks ago. You can catch the [performances on the AGO website](#). There are five presentations, roughly 50 minutes each, and each one showcases a world premiere. Artists include rising talent, winners of regional competitions, etc. It is world-class concert material. So with that, Ron Coleman jumped in with a question for Nelson: "Why did Mozart kill his chickens?" Muted silence from the crowd. "Because they started each day crowing, "BACH, Bach, Bach, Bach, Bach...."



President Buff introduced her friend, **Bill Gershon**. Bill was active in the Lions Club of Glendora, serving as president in 1983 and again in 1991. Buff and Bill were in Germany last summer for a medieval festival in Bretten. They met when she was

Inspiration for the Day *by Roger House*

"There are four stages in life. In the first stage, you believe in Santa Claus. In the second stage, you don't believe in Santa Claus. In the third stage, you ARE Santa Claus, and in the fourth stage, you look like Santa Claus."



tapped to edit his memoirs, published in 2018. You can find his book, [Memoir of a Memory Freak](#), covering his first 90 years, at Amazon. Bill is the father of Grant Gershon, Director of the LA Master Chorale, who will be our speaker next week.

Our Speaker **Ken Johnson** introduced three friends who attended: fellow writers, **John and Ann Brantingham**, **Kate Flannery**, and his publisher, **Mark Givens**.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

IPP Cameron informed the club that we gave a 2019-20 grant of \$500 to ViNA (Village Network Africa), Anita Boling's organization to purchase nano water filters for



schools. We also funded a \$10,000 grant for development of a water source for a ViNA-supported school in Tanzania, which now no longer has to buy trucked-in water. Thanks to John Tulac for taking the lead in completing these international grants.

SERGEANT Nona Tirre

Nona Tirre fined **Blanca Aguilar** just because she misses her! Blanca said: oh, wow, I'm getting fined! It makes me feel part of the Rotary Club!



To Bobby Hyde: OK, first, you totally deserved the Nelson Bell Award; the fine is for doing 95 MPH on the return from visiting your granddaughter. Trying to justify his actions, Bobby offered "it was a late Tuesday night departure from Vallejo, and I had a golf game with Harry early Wednesday morning. So it's Harry's fault. Next up, **Harry Sparrow**—first, congrats on the well-deserved Stickels Award, and then pay up for causing Bobby to drive so dangerously.

Chrissie and Ned Paniagua—

Chrissie, you're fined for taking cycling seriously in this pandemic era, clocking 277+ miles in a week, burning 6,000+ calories along the way! She's on the



bike daily, cycling at least 40 miles. A typical outing would be Claremont to Huntington Beach. She said it helped keep her sane with all the anxiety about the restaurant closing due to the pandemic. (**Steve Schenck** suggests a \$ a mile... kidding!) Now, **Ned**, you've been spotted in your Jeep, driving with the doors off, leg hanging out the side. Is that safe?

He said it is just a few blocks here and there, around town. Low speed, tame driving. (Do we believe this? Ned has been

on Jeep trips with **Jerry Tambe**, whose bad influence is already evident.) **Roger House and Mike DeWees**—Roger? Roger? (Buehler, Buehler?) He was missing in zoomland. OK, Mike, what's the story?

"Well, I see him out walking when I'm walking the dog, and usually he's in skinny jeans so tight he butt dials while walking, but lately he's been out and about in shorts. I never thought I'd see those legs." **Anita Boling**, why should you be fined? "Because my son got married yesterday, and we all participated on Zoom. It was supposed to be a big gathering in Italy in June, but instead the couple went to St. Lucia and the rest of us were remote. It was a beautiful wedding all the same."



FINE MOMENTS IN ROTARY HISTORY

Chuck Carpenter, how about some folklore about the podium we use at our regular meetings? Chuck recalled that it was built by a long-time member, deeply ded-



icated to Rotary, who was so disturbed by then-recent changes (the inclusion of women) that he left the club. Chuck suggested that he may have realized in the ensuing years that those changes had made Rotary a better, stronger, more effective, more dynamic organization. Had his health been better, Chuck was confident he would have rejoined the new, improved Rotary Club of Claremont, having learned his lesson. He may be gone, but the podium remains to remind us: embrace diversity; embrace inclusion, and to remember a good man who had gone wrong but had found his way again. **Lee Goldstein** added that we'll have to give Chuck the benefit of the doubt that **Mack Parks** would have indeed rejoined. One interesting footnote: Mack was very tall, and the podium he built was well-suited to his stature. Others, let us call them height-challenged, had to stand on a box to see over the top (and in turn be seen). A few years after the podium was built, we cut a foot or so off the bottom, so it's now its current size. (And **Jerry Tambe** still has to stand on a box.)

Finally, Nona, expressed a note of concern that we haven't seen **Mr. Sock** for a long time, and new members may not know him or even know of him.

Might he somehow be available? **John Tulac** took up the challenge and produced Mr. Sock, resplendent in what looked like formal wear for a night Out on the Town. His origins go back to John's early days in the club, when he needed some gimmick as Sergeant, since he knew few of the members. Thereafter, Mr. Sock became a regular at debunkings, though sadly he missed this year's. In Roger House's debunking, he showed up as Obi-wan Socky to **Chris Hayes Shaner's** Princess Leia. Anyway, Mr. Sock will likely be a more frequent attendee at our meetings this year as John makes a pitch for funds for our programs. Not to be outdone by Bacon Bits, with the right posture, Mr. Sock can hold a bunch of coins!



With so many new members, we'll be introducing more elements of Club History into our meetings and the sergeants. What would you like to know? Would you be willing to join a history happy hour to learn about why we do what we do? Please tell Anita Hughes or Buff Wright.



ANNOUNCEMENTS, continued from page 2

Forthcoming Programs: **August 7,** Grant Gershon, with talk about the LA Master Chorale Off stage, coping with performance when you can't get together to make music at Disney Concert Hall. **August 14,** Raoul Rodriguez, immediate past president of Claremont Kiwanis, is coming to recruit Rotarians (Ha!) and talk about Kiwanis' role in the community. **August 21,** Rebecca Ustrell, from Curious Magazine will be talking about Inland Empire artists.

August 28, District Governor Greg Jones makes his official visit to our club. He has been here already this summer, but for this one he takes center stage. **Betty Sheldon** is our organizing committee for the DG Visit and will give us instructions as needed. NB: District 5300 will be refunding some of our district dues because of savings related to the virtual cessation of travel for District personnel.

The new directory will be out in a couple of weeks, with the calendar for the year. For now, know that we'll be dark September 4 for Labor Day.

Sylvia Whitlock attended a Zone 33-34 session called Infinite Possibilities, looking at the situation of women in Rotary. Women, who constitute half of the population, make up only about 29% of Rotarians worldwide. More than 1100 signed up for the event, and about 400 were in the sessions Sylvia participated in to talk about diversity, among other things.

Ron Coleman then added something from the memorial service for Congressman John Lewis, since it pertains to Sylvia's conference and women in Rotary. Quoting John Lewis: "You have to tell the truth. The whole truth. The good and the bad. Maybe some things that are uncomfortable for some people." **Sylvia Whitlock** added that in the news about people demonstrating because of abuse of minorities, abuse is only part of the story. Even more than abuse, ignoring issues as they pertain to minorities is especially painful, as it touches the heart. "I don't care about it" is its own kind of abuse.

Big News from Rotary International



Jennifer E. Jones, a member of the Rotary Club of Windsor-Roseland, Ontario, Canada, has been nominated to become Rotary International's president for 2022-23, a selection that will make her the first woman to hold that office in

the organization's 115-year history. A current Rotary Foundation trustee, Jones has been a Rotarian since 1997 and has served Rotary as vice president, director,

ANNUAL CLUB AWARDS

Immediate Past President Cameron presented the **2019-20 James Stickels New Member Award**, which recognizes a member of no more than 3 years standing who has been actively engaged in the club and shows good potential for club leadership, is enthusiastic, friendly and promotes fellowship among Rotarians: to **Harry Sparrow!**

Harry noted that the list of past winners is a real All-Star roster, and he's honored to join them; he also extended thanks to Arman Ariane, who was his club membership sponsor.



Next, the **2019-20 Nelson C. Bell Award**, which acknowledges a member of more than 5 years' standing for exemplary club leadership and engagement in a sustained way, while maintaining a high attendance standard — to **Bobby Hyde!** Bobby noted that we have pretty good retention in our club, which he ascribes to great leadership, and a bench that is really deep. One reason for that is that we work hard to develop leadership among new members.

And they keep the impulse as the years roll by. We may have a club with a lot of grey-haired members, but they have young hearts. We see the fruits of that spirit in this pandemic, as the club adapts, moves on, stays goal-oriented, keeps the fellowship alive. (Note for newer members: Bobby was the central figure in the creation of the Taste of Claremont, both in launching it and in nurturing it as it grew into the gala it is today.) See Bobby's article, page 6



training leader, committee chair, moderator, and district governor. Her first task as a member of her local Club was to manage the LobsterFest fund-raiser! She has moved only upward from there on, and she is now the co-chair of the End Polio Now Countdown to History Campaign Committee, which aims to raise \$150 million for polio eradication efforts.

Sylvia Whitlock remarked, "About five or six years ago when I was on stage with her in Idaho, I predicted she would be the first female president. How proud I am that she is also a 2020 recipient of the Sylvia Whitlock Leadership Award and that I was able to present it some weeks ago.

Johnson, continued from p. 1

stream and trying to cool down the wall of flame. It gets hotter.

And better. Any idiot would be terrified, but I find myself turned on. Oblivious to the obvious danger, not caring that I am driven to my knees with the intense reflective heat from the flames on both sides, I take joy in holding my ground. No longer caring at all that the fire had jumped the road and was on the verge of creating a total rout, I am lost in the fight. The outcome simply doesn't matter. The doors to hell have been breached, and I lose myself in the passionate embrace of the unholy. I truly love it here.



Perhaps Nirvana is the product of Shiva's sword and not quiet contemplation. Surrounded by twisting entrails of flame, where the light has become silver and an angelic chorus sings beyond hearing, I have finally found the navel of the world. This is the center of the holy city, the eye of God. I have come home to a place I'd never imagined, to a time without time. Eternity, it seems, has come to life.

I become aware of a frantic beating on my back and helmet, and hands begin to drag me backwards. "Oh, no," I think, "Not now, I finally just got here!"

As a psychological consultant Ken went through his own therapy and had to confront some uncomfortable truths about why he was drawn to the excitement of such incidents and the adrenaline it creates. Ken went on to share a story about being called in as a traumatic consultant to help people who refused to leave their houses while fire descended on them in a piece called "Evacuation." (pp. 55-57)

The fire progressed steadily through the tall pines up the long valley in the Sawtooth Mountains north of Boise. All but one of the cabins had been evacuated. Fire crews were attempting to protect structures, but also fighting a rear-guard action in the face of the advance. I had been sent to talk the old man out of his cabin before he was cooked. "He'll burn. Just see if you can get him out of there," the IC had said.

I knocked on his door. He opened, squinting against the amber light and stinging smoke. "Mr. Bartlett? I'm Doc Johnson. The Incident Commander asked me to come by and talk to you."

"Who are you?"

"Doc Johnson. I'm the fire shrink. They have me work with the firefighters, usually."

"And old farts like me," he smiled a little. "I'm Ted Bartlett. Glad to meet you. I don't need to be shrunk."

I couldn't help smiling. Two engines went by making hearing difficult. "Mind if I come in?"

"Suit yourself. I got water."

We sat in the living area of the small place, decorated with stuffed deer heads and hand-mounted posters from old Outdoor Life and Field and Stream magazines. Lanterns, saws, and Indian blankets hung on the walls. An oil cloth draped the small table as a gesture toward civility. We drank our water.

"So what are you supposed to say," he inquired patiently.

"I'm supposed to ask you to leave, Mr. Bartlett, to evacuate with the rest of the cabin owners." I looked beyond him out the window, from which I could see the approaching glow from the flames. I heard one of the engines backing up to the cabin. "There's no way they can save this place."

"Well, that's kind of you, and the Incident Commander. But you shouldn't have bothered. I'm not leaving."

I sipped my water. "Why not, if you don't mind my asking?"

"No, I don't mind. I've had this place all my life. It was my family's summer cabin until they passed, it's my year-round home now." He looked around. "It's what I know."

I thought about that. "You don't have family?"

"Not here, anyway. And they don't want me there."

"Out of contact?"

"Pretty much," he allowed. "We fell out a few years ago. Couldn't seem to get it back together."

The red glow was getting brighter, hotter. The wind was picking up, and I heard something hit the roof.

"So you're telling me that if you left here, you'd pretty much have no place to go?"

Then something hit the window. I looked up and saw a frothy pink foam being sprayed on the outside walls. This meant the crew was about to give up on the cabin, insulate it, and move on. They'd officially thrown in the towel.

"Look, Mr. Bartlett," I began. "Ted . . ." he interrupted.

"Look, Ted. These guys outside, me, we've got to live for years with what you are about to do. Marshall law has not been declared. We legally cannot pull you out of here. You will burn to death, and we'll be left with that. You'll haunt us for years. Please do not do that to us."

Thanks and Thoughts of Claremont Rotary

Submitted by Bobby Hyde

At our Rotary Zoom Meeting on Friday I received the Nelson Bell Award for long term service in the club and to the communities we serve. I felt very honored to receive the award and described our club to the members present as an acronym with the word ENERGY!

I love our club as so many others that I feel compelled to put pin to paper in describing our club "ENERGY!".

E = Enthusiastic! This means we have FUN in caring out the work of Rotary. Everyone is involved in ways that work for themselves and the club. A definite feeling of "jump right in."

N = Nourishment! Our members have their bodies, spirits and minds nourished, both for ourselves and the communities we serve through our club projects, committees and club meetings. Rotarians seem like a rare breed that has to serve society. Should everyone be a Rotarian?

E = Empathetic or Effective! Our club LISTENS to the voices within the club and the communities we serve in so many ways. We are not self-centered.

R = Robust! Our club never gets old, it stays fine-tuned through its membership, committees, management team, and board of directors. The club president serves only once and so a new face appears each following year. There are term limits for the Board of Directors. Membership on committees change each year, on and on and so forth.

G = Great or Goal Minded, Genuine! The club gets things done through development of ideas and passion. Everyone is important in this endeavor.

The results of strength of our Club is seen in long sustaining programs like A Taste of Claremont, Together We Prepare offering CPR at El Roble, Bill's Bikes for Kids, and International programs putting in water wells, supporting schools, etc. One just has to look at our club directory to see all the needs that our club fills. Truly amazing!

Y = Youthful! I was once asked by a District Governor to describe our club. I could only think of a simple answer which was: "We are a grey haired club with young beating hearts." Of course this drew laughter with some members looking around the room looking for grey hairs (some fun in the answer). We are a club that has been around for some time (over 90 years) that has not gotten stale. This exists thanks to the amazing membership and leadership of our Claremont Rotary Club.

I'm so happy to be a Rotarian and a member of Claremont Rotary. I bet and hope you are too.

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He was quiet for a long time. I could hear the snapping and the groan of the approaching fire. The red was beginning to peek through the pink foam through the window. I could smell the smoke.

Ted sighed and looked around his home. "You're right, Doc. You can't live with that. I can't die with it, either. I guess we'd better go."

He got up from his chair and we headed for the door. I noticed he already had his bag packed.

Ken read another excerpt about his time working the aftermath of the 9/11 strikes in New York. It's called "The Smell of Angels" and has just been accepted by a literary magazine called Shark Reef. They labelled it fiction but Ken says it's not.

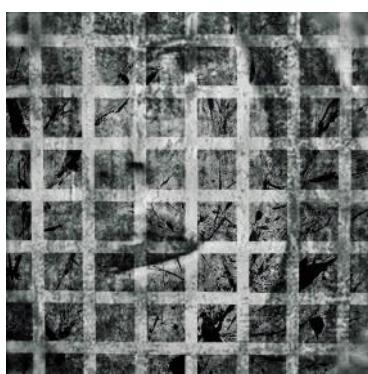
After he was finished, Ken took some questions about his time as a therapist and how he has dealt with impossible situations. Writing this book was part of a healing process, recovering memories suppressed, and examining his emotions and reactions. He can relate to the tough situation we're all in with the pandemic and the position the schools and teachers are dealing with.

He described his writing process last summer when he wrote the book and gave credit to his publisher, who was also on the zoom, for all the support he's received.

Those who were in the meeting were treated to Ken's artwork from the book. They're photographs, typically multiple exposures that are then colorized in a dreamy sort of way.



This was a very deep and engaging presentation and nobody noticed that we had gone longer than usual. Ken closed by generously offering to sign the book for those who purchase it.





the CLARifier

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UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Aug 7	LA Master Chorale Offstage Grant Gershon, Conductor	Buff Wright Claremont Rotary President 2020-2021
Aug 14	Kiwanis in Claremont Raul Rodriguez, Immediate Past President	 Rotary Opens Opportunities
Aug 21	Curious Magazine, Rebecca Ustell	
Aug 28	Official Visit from District Governor, Greg Jones	
Sept 4	Dark for Labor Day (Going somewhere?)	



Photo of the week
Submitted by Steve Schenck

Is that a Naked Lady, Steve? The last naked lady shown at Rotary was in 2008 when Mike Pearlman and Doug McGoons PPT about Burning Man got stuck on a spicy photo. (It's History!)



Bacon Bits
Let's fill up the pig!



Sergeants' committee gathers before each meeting at 11:30 AM in the Orchard Lounge at the DoubleTree Hotel and anyone with information to share is welcome!!

Clarifier Committee

Mike DeWees, co-editor
Bill Burrows
Lark Gerry
Bobby Hyde
Jim Lehman
Steve Schenck
Chris Hayes Shaner
Harry Sparrow
Peter Weinberger
Buff Wright, editor

Website

Information about the club and back editions of this newsletter are always available on [DACdb](#) and www.claremontRotary.org

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Taste of Claremont news

tasteofclaremont.org/



Notes: Jim Lehman (meeting), Mike DeWees (program) Photos: Steve Schenck
The Claremont Rotary Club meets on Zoom at 12:00 on Friday until further notice