



# Charlotte Reporter

## The Rotary Club of Charlotte

### March 26, 2013

Charter Date December 1, 1916 Club 6006 District 7680  
www.charlotterotary.org

### Harry L. Jones, Sr. – The Man (Mecklenburg County Manager) By: Sheila Bacon

After a long career in public service in Dallas, Texas and in Raleigh and Fayetteville, North Carolina, Mr. Jones became the Assistant County Manager in 1991. He was named to the top job of Mecklenburg County Manager in 2000.



He is well-known among Charlotte Rotarians not only for his outstanding work in his official local government capacity but also for his myriad civic and community activities as well as his professional accomplishments all of which have earned him many awards. On this day, we saw a glimpse of Harry Jones, the man.

He chose his Rotary appearance to share his story of personal and spiritual healing from his self-described perspective as a Christian.

He related a series of life-changing events which began, he believes, on December 21, 2011 when a series of medical tests followed by a biopsy led his doctor to report the presence of pancreatic cancer.

Pancreatic cancer is the fourth leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States. Its survival rate –the lowest of all cancers- has not improved much over the last 40 years. The discouraging statistics reveal 74% of patients stricken with this killer die within the first year.

Jones said he doesn't remember much about that December 22<sup>nd</sup> when he learned it was stage 4 pancreatic cancer with metastasis to his liver. He *does* remember being told there was no cure and that he really had few options, in fact one: chemotherapy. And the treatments would begin twelve days hence, on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. The twelve days of Christmas had suddenly taken on a whole new meaning. He described his liver as resembling raisin bread. It was scarred by 40 lesions. The pancreas tumor, itself, was the size of a quarter.

But he said he better handled that meeting with the oncologist because of positive thoughts having been shared by his doctor which brought him to conclude that he was a "Faith Liar," a term he used to explain that he had not been a faithful reader of the Word, did not have a steady prayer life and did not attend church on a regular basis. He called the experience one of renewal and a restoration of his soul.

He recounted the several steps in that restoration much like an author whose chapters are used to develop the whole story.

Restoration 1 occurred on December 23, 2011 as he shared his news with his Mother and his in-laws in Southern Pines. His sister, Sharon may have provided the real spark to ignite his new path when she told him, "As I look at you I don't detect sickness. I see healthiness." "Harry," he quoted her as saying, "do not claim sickness. If you claim anything, claim you are being healed in the name of Jesus." She gave him a moment to let that sink in and then added, "Harry, you can't just say it, you have to believe it." It was a constant thought in his mind, he said, as he drove back to Charlotte and he "had to believe it."

He was shopping on Christmas Eve for what he thought would be the last Christmas present he would be able to give to his wife. His whole day had been clouded with thoughts of his mortality. That's when it happened, Restoration 2.

Out of the blue, he said he began citing Mark 11:23-24 "Have faith in God, for verily I say unto you that whosoever shall say unto the mountain be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea. And whosoever believes in his heart and shall not doubt shall have whatsoever he asks. And whatever things you ask for when you pray, believe and you will receive them and they shall be yours." Jones said although he had still be struggling with his belief he began to feel something had changed as he

## PROGRAM SCHEDULE

2012-2013

Program Chair: Ed Driggs

1Qtr Edwin Peacock

2Qtr Colleen Brannan

3Qtr Bob Freeman

4Qtr Bill Constangy

### APRIL 2013

2<sup>nd</sup> **Tom Skains**  
President and CEO  
Piedmont Natural Gas

9<sup>th</sup> **Billy Packer**  
Sportscaster and Author

16<sup>th</sup> **Youth Exchange Students**  
Aliisa and Juan Carlos

12:30 Tuesday

Crowne Plaza – 201 S. McDowell Street

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/42974089870/>

continued to cite those words. He said the family traditions shared on that Christmas Eve were a source of joy leaving him with peace in his heart. He said he had not thought of his death since.

Harry returned to work several days after Christmas and worked on the emails he planned to send to the Board of County Commissioners along with a video message to county employees. The messages were for release at 8:00 A.M. on December 28<sup>th</sup>. Within seconds it seemed, the media reported that his recent medical diagnosis would require his absence from work for an extended period. Later that day Bishop George Battle called to pray with him, he said, and suggested that he read Psalm 139 daily. He did so and this proved to be restoration 3.

At some point during the night he felt his soul restored and reported his experience to his wife explaining about the restoration. His treatment had yet to begin but he told her he had been healed.

On New Year's Day, 2012, his wife and daughter attended church services with him and heard the Associate Pastor read the day's scripture from John, Chapter 5. It was the story of the healing pool and the man who had been there 38 years but had no one to help him into the pool to be healed. Seeing this, Jesus told the man to "pick up your mat and walk."

Harry said he knew he was meant to be in that service and for him it marked Restoration 4. The sermon focused on the healing power of prayer and the power of faith. Chemotherapy was scheduled to begin in two days.

The next step in his Restoration came when he decided to go public with his cancer diagnosis. It was not an easy decision and most had advised him against it. But he believed that in sharing his situation he could bring hope to others. He told the public about his diagnosis in mid-February, 2012. His disclosure has since brought him many opportunities to share his remarkable story of hope and restoration.

Harry Jones said his final restorative moment occurred when former County Commissioner, Neil Cooksey rose from his death bed after a 2 ½ year fight with pancreatic cancer and with grace showed him the "true meaning of courage."

Cooksey attended a Board meeting to say his goodbyes. Doing so, he reminded the Board members to be kinder in their deliberations with each other and to show love in meaningful ways with family members. Harry told his audience that Neil Cooksey "showed great courage in the face of death," that is something he'll always remember.

Tests conducted just last month revealed no lesions on Harry's liver and that the tumor that was the size of a quarter had shrunk to less than the size of a pea. He said he has no pain and has gone about his life with minimal disruption.

Our speaker said his experience has freed him from the fear of sickness, of pain, of death and fear of the unknown. He said he lives in the moment and knows what it means to be led beside still waters as described in Psalms 23. He reminded us that still waters are calm and peaceful and challenged us to be still and be at peace in the "know present" as he is.

"I challenge you to find peace in your lives, to pray continually, and to love unconditionally," he closed. I agree with President Marilyn who said she could think of no greater message during this Easter and Passover time than to hear a story of renewal and restoration and to hear it from a man we have seen work in our community. Having been exposed to a restored soul, we will look upon him now in a different light. We got a glimpse of Harry L. Jones, Sr – the man.

Head Table: Jenn Snyder, Lynn Wheeler, Marilyn Bowler, Ed Driggs, Bob Hagemann, Karen Bentley; Invocation: Don Steger  
Visitors & Guests: Jeff Searcy; Photos: Bert Voswinkel; Song: Ty Hands

## CLUB NEWS

→ **Jerry Bryson** read this week's Rotary message: Rotary members are expected to maintain a 50% attendance in weekly club meetings. Missed meetings can be made up by visiting other clubs or through the e-club website.

→ **Biff Virkler** reminded everyone that the electronics recycling project begins Tuesday. Items can be dropped off at tables provided in the hotel's parking deck. Click here for a list of eligible items: [www.charlotterotary.org](http://www.charlotterotary.org).

→ **John Tabor** thanked supporters of The Rotary Foundation: Paul Harris Fellow: **Natalie English, Ed Pickett, Jessica Dupree**; Level One: **Davan Cloninger**; Level Two: **Bob Brietz, John Phillips**; Level Six: **Luther Moore** and Level Seven: **John Tabor**.

→ Thanks to the tree planters at Southside Park over the weekend: Chase Saunders, Tim Newman & kids, Louis Watts, Biff Virkler, Mark Turner, David Tobin, and Jerry Coughter & his daughter.

→ Charlotte Rescue Mission Easter volunteers: [www.charlotterescuemission.org/easter-volunteering](http://www.charlotterescuemission.org/easter-volunteering).

<b>Attendance</b>	<u>03/26/2013</u>	<u>03/27/2012</u>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>New Members:</b> Heidi Frankson, Pete Marriott, Jermaine Husser, Bobby Sabates, Matthew Brown
Visitors & Guests	19	9	07/01/2012 316	
Club Members	165	158	03/19/2013 317	
Total Attendance	184	167	Net Increase +1	<b>Resignations:</b> Elizabeth Barnhardt, Greg Jones, Tigger Alexander
Percentage	57.7%			
<b>Birthdays April 2 - 8</b>			<b>Anniversaries April 2 - 8</b>	
05 Vinny Satchit	07 David Anderson		02 Natasha & L.J. Stambuk	02 Suzanne & Louis Bledsoe
08 Bruce Darden			04 Debbie & Bill Constangy	06 Lisa & Kelly Mirt
			07 Brenda Lee & Jim Simpson	