



WINTER Weekly

Reader

Volume 226, Issue 291, December 14th, 2017

The Plano Rotary Club
www.PlanoRotary.com

Not FARTA Travel then

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Dec 14th

Jeff Beckley

*End of Year Tax Tips
& Update on the Tax Bill in
Congress*

Dec 21st

NO NOON MEETING
HAPPY HOLIDAYS

DEC 28TH

NO NOON MEETING
HAPPY HOLIDAY



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

James Lowe	Dec 03
Nathan Barbera	Dec 09
Johnny Lewis	Dec 10
Jamee Jolly	Dec 13
Nancy Humphrey	Dec 19
Jim Cooper	Dec 23
Herbert Hoxie, Sr.	Dec 23



JOHNN CALDWELL has agreed to edit the next *Weekly Reader* as **Sainted Editor** is going to exercise his wanderlust yet again...this time to Snyder, Texas, and points beyond. Hardly exotic, I understand, and on few bucket lists. John was also today's photographer with his trusty Apple iPhone™. He's clearly at least a double threat man.

Hero of the Prince and the Pea, **Rick Horne**, opened festivities at 12:12, calling upon **Blair Ritchey** for the Invocation and **Alex Johnson** for the Pledge and congratulating himself on his yeoman exercise of Greeter. He hunted for **SERGEANT KRAMER** who was struggling with the meeting room door. When he succeeded in entering, Jason was greeted with his largest ovation of all time.

Jason offered up ZERO Visiting Rotarians and only a single guest. Chris Parr introduced his "blushing bride of 32 years," or, as he keeps telling her, 25. He said **Pat Storck** had opted to attend today to hear the infomercial from **FLASH** about ARTA Travel, which handles all their travels. In turn, they keep it in the black.



The lucky recipient of the **Black Spot** was **Pam Little** because she was wearing **ruby slippers**. She just forgot to click her heels thrice at the right time. So she got to



deliver Jason's version of a Classification Talk (which includes embarrassing material).

Pam noted that she had been instrumental in the development of the *Fairview Rotary* as well as the **Samaritan Inn**. She characterized both as "a lot of assembly required." Her introduction to SI came with a fieldtrip taking by Leadership Fairview; she was less than impressed with the décor. But the motto of the place caught her fancy, "**Homeless is not Hopeless.**" Whenever she's feeling down, she need only remember that "whatever we deal with, it's better than homelessness."

Someone mentioned that, in her free time, she's running for political office. Jason said, "You'll be chosen if you wear those red shoes." Pam remarked, "It's a tight race. I'll keep you updated, especially if a certain somebody pulls into the lead."

Prince Horne congratulated **Mark Geller** on 43 years of Rotary Service! Mark received a standing ovation. Rick then read us the Dec.

Birthday List but

made no pitch for **Birthday Bucks**, missing a bet, uncharacteristic for a former Club Treasurer.





Prince Horne shilled for **Sara Akers' Plano Children's Theatre's** ribbon-cutting at 4:30 this evening at *Willow Bend*. Its Grand Opening is Friday at 5:30. And **Roy Reeves** announced a Club Project building towel racks from Pam Little's donated materials. On Saturday, 3 February, we will assemble and install the racks as a Club Project in lieu of a meeting on that date.



Nancy Humphrey begged time to explicate Pam's political ambitions: she's running for the Texas State Board of Education. Apparently she's running on the motto: **If you want something done, ask a busy person!**



Olin Jaye rose to roast **Larry Flannery**, the day's speaker. He told us that Larry was born at a young age on a small cranberry farm in southern New Jersey. He came from a prominent Irish-Italian family related to the Corleones, the Sopranos, and the Gotti Family.

Larry was a veteran of the US Army where he served as a Medic specializing in medicinal herbs. He's married with two children. His first career was in the network security business. He took that business public while he was active in politics, volunteering, and philanthropy in Plano. He started a travel business, serving the needs of **Marco Polo, Attila the Hun, Columbus**, and the Vikings.

Larry conceded that he was born at an early age, but he questioned the research of the rest of Olin's introduction. He said that Olin had missed a crucial, formative event in his life: he ran away with a Circus, but his Mother made him "give it back."

Looking out upon a decidedly friendly audience, eager to consume his repartee, he nonetheless declared stage fright as "easier to speak to an audience of unknowns." He "illustrated" this with a bon mot about **Adm. Nelson** accosted by a single Spanish galleon, saying, "Raise the flag. Roll out the cannons, and bring me my red coat." When, in a second encounter, he gave the same commands, a subordinate inquired as to the utility of the red coat. Adm. Nelson replied that, if he was wounded, the red coat would disguise the blood and thus not dishearten his crew. When set upon by five galleons, he commanded, "Raise the flag. Roll out the cannons, and bring me my brown pants!"

Although he had prepared a lecture on Tips, Tricks and Traps for Travelers, he encouraged his audience to ask questions throughout.

People ask him the same questions about his work:

1. Where in the world have you been?
2. How come you're in the travel business?
3. How do you compete with the Internet agencies?



He didn't found ARTA. It was started by two guys named **Anderson** and **Ruckel**, so it was the *Anderson-Ruckel Travel Agency* (ARTA). But neither of them was a travel specialist, so in order to be accredited, they had to employ **FLASH's** wife, **Karen**, a travel professional. Larry cautioned her to hold out for partnership as a further condition of ARTA's accreditation, and they agreed. But *Flannery-Anderson-Ruckel Travel Agency* (FARTA) was an unfortunate choice of acronym, so, when they sold the business to her, it became the *Accurate, Reliable Travel Agency* (ARTA once more).

At the time, **FLASH** kept his Network Security job "to support the family" while he graciously (boorishly) permitted Karen to play with her "toy travel agency." But when Karen couldn't get rid of ARTA ("you can't sell a family business"), Larry came to work for his wife. Now daughter **Tammy McSwain** runs the business with her husband, and Larry traded a Boss Wife for a Boss Daughter! (One can imagine Mr. Rogers: "Can you say, 'Emasculated?'")

A tectonic shift took place when the airlines stopped paying travel agents' commissions. ARTA was forced to charge travelers for their bookings, and many businesses quit using them. But they soon returned, finding it to their economic advantage not to have an in-house travel department but rather use ARTA's expertise.

Business travel was their *métier* until ARTA discovered that even businesspersons take the occasional vacation. So it added leisure travel to its services. Even pirates need to take vacations for the "Arrrrrh and arrrrrh."



The Internet is more of a help than a hindrance as it makes travelers savvy! They come with list of finds that make ARTA's life more efficient.

A major segment of ARTA's business is Incentive Travel, in which businesses offer vacation prizes. The largest such that ARTA has booked was a convention for 35,000! But it's usually "a weekend at the Anatole."

Although air crashes are "the last thing a travel agent should talk about," Larry related a story about three couples standing before the **Pearly Gates** being interviewed by **Q★D**. The first couple are rejected because of avarice; "You even married a girl named 'Penny'." The second couple are rejected because of gluttony; "You even married a girl named 'Sherry'." The third husband quickly turns to leave, telling his wife, "We should just give up, **Fanny**."

Larry offered these **Tips**:

1. Book early for the best discounts.
2. Don't book during Peak Seasons.
3. Book "Shoulder Seasons" (between high and low)
4. Get a **TSA** or better yet a **GLOBAL ENTRY** to whiz through customs. (And don't squint for your picture.)

Marc Johnson wanted to know, “What is CLEAR?” Larry told him that it’s a non-governmental program that runs more efficiently but “TSA or GE is better”. The cost for Global Entry is \$150 for five years.

As for **Tricks**:

1. Use Rewards Programs for leisure
2. Register with Business Extra to earn not only Frequent Flyer miles but also to accumulate points for other things.
3. Be leery of the shortest security line. Larry chose one such in Boston only to discover it to be the one which frisks drug dealers. He missed his flight as a consequence of the 34 minute “ultimate search” for which he had inadvertently “volunteered.”
4. Use a travel card to accumulate miles.
5. Redeem for upgrades rather than ticket purchase for highest cost effect.

Since he was running low on time, Larry raced through his **Traps**:

1. Bringing too much luggage. Larry suggested that we write down what we’ll wear for each day of the trip and pack ONLY that.
2. Carrying home soiled clothes. Instead, he suggested wearing old clothes and throwing them away!
3. Expensive transfer fees. For large families, it pays to hire a limo rather than pay exorbitant per person fees.
4. Accepting the hotel’s first offer. Question the clerk then wait; “the next person that speaks, loses.”
5. Inflexible travel dates. Be as flexible as possible when traveling to take advantage of empty seat syndrome. For the airlines as for hotels, “50% of something is better than 100% of nothing.”

He couldn’t resist unloading further tricks:

- Stay longer in one hotel
- Mexico & Canada offer good deals
- Use a travel agency (even if not ARTA)

Rick Horne offered a tale of a business flight to South Korea that would have been \$4800 from DFW but was \$3500 from San Antonio! Even with the Southwest airfare to

SA added in, he saved over \$1,000 by clever routing.

Larry had a drawing for “stuff.” Those of us that had them, had put our business cards in a bucket for the drawing. There’s little mystery about what ARTA will DO with all those cards. But, at the moment, Larry asked **Jo Via** to draw cards for door prizes.



CAPTAIN KIRK BELL won a sleeve of golf balls as did **Francis Cartwright**. Pam Little won a travel clock. And the **GRAND PRIZE**, a travel bag “worth \$100,” went to Blair Ritchey.

Prince Horne characterized Larry’s talk as informative, entertaining, and “everything.”



Then he gifted Larry with our multi-port charger. “I can use that.”

Roy Reeves recommended that we “pencil in” our January 20th tour of the Ford Center for “family, friends, and guests.” It’s \$15 for a guided tour, and he’ll be taking RSVP lists before long.

CAPTAIN KIRK recommended us to “hang no mistletoe in offices” this empowerment season.

Rick led us in the Four-Way Test and released us into the Wild Blue at 1:05.



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The Plano Rotary Club

P.O. Box 864316

Plano, TX 75086

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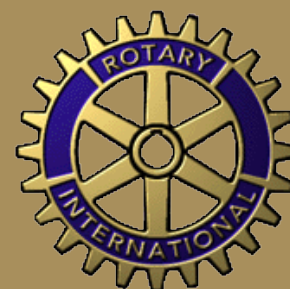
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