



Winter
Weekly

Reader

Volume 146, Issue 206, February 25, 2016

The Plano Rotary Club
www.PlanoRotary.com

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Feb 25th
Bob Young-Weitzman-
"New West Plano
Developments and
Activities"

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Lynne McLean	Feb 01
Jason Kramer	Feb 07
Karla Oliver	Feb 13
Sam Greif	Feb 14
Doyle Dean	Feb 19
Dennis Fuller	Feb 22
Chris Henry	Feb 23
Carroly Moebius	Feb 27
Kyle Walters	Feb 27



90 MINUTE WONDER

ACTUALLY, it was a **100-minute** wonder: this meeting! Few of us had the temerity to wander out during the program. Those who have done so will face a stiff reprimand from **Dr. Myrtle Hightower**.

President Paperweight started the ball rolling at 12:23, delayed, no doubt, by the onslaught of guests! One wonders then how *Gleneagles* will handle the five Plano Rotary clubs attending the joint meeting on **HIGH SPEED RAIL** in April. (Well, there'll be at least one empty chair at the head table; *Sainted Editor* will be in Morocco.)



Kelly called **Earnest Burke** for the invocation who abdicated in favor of **Doc Gibbs** for the Lord's Prayer. President-in-Waiting **Dave McWhorter** led us in the Pledge, and Earnest was thanked for Greeting. Kelly summoned **SERGEANT BARBERA** (no relation to *Major Barbara*) to welcome the throng.

Visiting from the *Prestonwood Club* was PDG **Richard Gilman**. **Bill Newkrantz** (Plano Sunrise) was welcomed, and the furthest-flung Rotarian was **Richard Meyer** from the *Space Center Club* of Clearlake, TX.



Earl Simpkins introduced wife **Barbara**, daughter **Alice**, and mother **Maisie**. **Joe Camenara** had invited a Paint-and-Body man, **Clifford Gomes**. (A new specialty, Randy!)



Our **BLACK HISTORY MONTH** program drew many City of Plano VIPs: Mayor Har-

ry **LaRosiliere**, Police Chief **Greg Rushin** and Asst. Chief **Ed Drain**, PISD Superintendent **Brian Binggeli**, Board Director **Marilyn Hinton**, and Arts Czar **Kathy Kuddes**.



Earnest hesitated to introduce all of Myrtle's guests, opt-

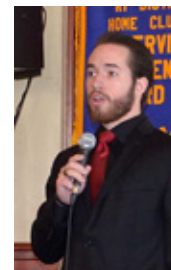


ing instead to "remove about 10 minutes from the program" by asking them to stand. It seemed as if the entire room rose! Nathan also referred to the media present.

Earnest introduced the day's **MASTER OF CEREMONIES**, **Reggie Carter**. Reggie told us that he was a product of *Plano Senior High* (Class of '93) and that he attended *Langston University* (scattered cheers) on the recommendation of Myrtle. Reggie's Dad approved because there "was no McDonald's for miles!" He credited Myrtle with being a seminal influence.

Our program today was the Hallowed Songs of African American Memories. Reggie told us that Blacks have had in "impact on the narrative of the American Past" extending back "before the arrival of the Mayflower." Then he introduced Tuskegee Airman Col. **William O. Dwiggin**s who graduated from the Marine Corps Academy top of his class and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant.

Prior to Col. Dwiggin's, the program included a song written by a PISD student in a program chaired by Myrtle: *The Song of Freedom*, sung by **Tate Keen**. Its refrain was:

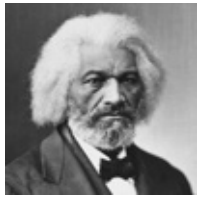


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*Brother and Sister, unite as one,
Mother and Daughter, Father and Son.
It takes us altogether, hand in hand
To sweep equality throughout this land.
This is our Song of Freedom.*

Col. Dwiggins said that his Father was the first certified ophthalmologist in the South. Whether they're called Blacks, Negroes, or Africans, they left their mark and "*made our contributions to this world.*" They were shipped in appalling conditions from Africa to ports from New England to New Orleans and were "*shackled to the job they had to do.*" But they never lost their identity; indeed newspapers were written to "*honor that identity.*"

1000s of young Africans, whole families and separated families were



crammed onto slave ships. But occasionally, as was the case with **Frederick Douglass**, slaves escaped and even attained an education. Douglass said of the Hallowed Songs that "*I did not, when a slave, understand the deep meaning of those rude and apparently incoherent songs. I was myself within the circle; so that I neither saw nor heard as those without might see and hear.*" Indeed the songs were virtual coded manuals for escape and migration to freedom.

Col. Dwiggins showed us Sales Proclamations for "*strong young bucks*" and "*strong wenches*" to produce whole families of slaves if properly husbanded. The songs were adapted from spirituals written "*about the Church; about who we were.*" They contained instructions like "*follow the Drinking Gourd*" (the Big Dipper) north to freedom. Indeed, an actual manual, *The Green Book*, was published with details of moving from safe house to safe house north to freedom. The Underground Railroad arose to aid



slaves, and **Harriet Tubman** was instrumental in this effort. She (standing left) escaped after shooting her abusive husband, **Nelson Davis** (seated with stick), and fleeing north. There she found Anti-Slavery sentiment; after all, Pilgrims had escaped oppression by fleeing to America from Britain. It empathized with southern slaves and aided the Underground Railroad.



Owners offered phenomenal bountys (for the time) of \$100 for the return of runaways (Harriet's was **\$40,000**, the highest bounty ever!), because they not only toiled in fields but in the Massa's bed and nursery "*when the Mrs. wasn't able to serve.*"

During the Civil War, Blacks were used by both sides; they collected and buried bodies and body parts as well as tending to the camps. In the North, they carried arms as, for example, the Free Massachusetts Militia or the Buffalo Soldiers.

Slave owners were understandably reluctant to have their charges attend church, where the pastors spread the gospel of escape. This was in contrast to the message given Blacks in WWI, that they would be free from discrimination. That apparently didn't include freedom from lynching when they got "*too uppity*" nor the freedom to sit where they pleased in theaters and public transportation.

Amazing Grace was composed by a White man, **John Newton**, who "*had an epiphany*" when sailing on a slave ship. Blood plasma was discovered by the Black Dr. **Paul Drew**, who, however, expired from wounds when his invention could have saved him but for the fact that the nearest hospital was for Whites Only.

The qualification for Tuskegee Airmen was no less than a Bachelor's degree, but their White officers were not college educated. Two of Col. Dwiggins' own military forebears attained the rank of General, one graduating at the top of his class but shunned by fellow students. Nevertheless, the military "*was the only social experiment where*" advancement was possible for Blacks.

Col. Dwiggins showed a photo purporting to be of a White hunter with a Black child trophy. It was the most disturbing of his presentation.



Nevertheless, the minds and hearts of Blacks "*were free even in bondage.*" It reminded Col. Dwiggins of the poem *Invictus* by **William Ernest Henley** when ends:

*I am the master of my fate.
I am the captain of my soul.*

MC Reggie Carter then introduced **Connie Frost** and **Drew Pearson** to make a presentation to "*Myrtle Elliott Hightower.*" Drew lauded her work with *Plano Community Charities* citing her tireless efforts in the Resale Shop where we might find clothing "*with the name Drew Pearson inside.*" He asked us to imagine a Plano "*with Myrtle not here.*" Frightening.

Drew spoke of signing autographs willingly for fans at a lunch counter only to be approached by an admiring but anonymous foundation trustee who entrusted him with a check to be presented to his choice of charity. And he chose Myrtle's *Plano Community Charities*. With that, Drew presented a check for \$50,000 to Myrtle who quipped that Drew had thrown another "*Hail Mary*" with this.



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Reggie echoed those sentiments when he explained to his Mother that Myrtle had asked him to MC today's program. When his Mom asked, "What did you say?" Reggie replied, "Mom, it's Myrtle Hightower!" As if that wasn't enough, Reggie told us that he had started an apparel business with a line of credit from Drew Pearson!

Due to the lateness of the hour, Doc Gibbs recommended that we sing "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" to Gleneagles' valet. Then, concerned about whether he'd get the hook from "Black Irishman" Kelly Palmer, Doc nevertheless closed the program with the spiritual "Children, Go Where I Send Thee." He had passed out numbered slips to solicit response to his call: "How shall I send thee?"

Kelly caught the second, singing "I'm gonna send thee two-by-two" to which Doc replied, "Two for Paul and Silas. One for the itty bitty baby who was born in Bethlehem,"

and so on through the dozen verses of the hallowed song.

3. **David Bowman**

4. A guest of Myrtle's

5. **Herb Hoxie**

6. A soft-voiced guest

7. **Jeff Fraunheim**

8. "Any time you're ready," Cliff Gomes

9. Earl Simpkins

10. A quartet of

- **Ric Kasmiskie**

- **Ean Sullivan**

- **Chris Henry, and**

- **LB THE REMAINING.**

11. **Dennis Högg**

12. At last, "A guest with a voice!"

Earnest was dispatched to pass out coin tokens at the door to departing participants in hopes that they would consider joining Plano Rotary Club. Kelly thanked Doc Gibbs, led us in the Four-Way Test and closed the meeting at 1:40!

Guest

Barbara Simpkins
Clifford Gomes

Visiting Rotarian

Richard Gilman
Bill Newkranz
Richard Meyer

Guest of

Earl Simpkins
Joe Camarena

Home Club

Prestonwood
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