

Winter  
Weekly

# Reader

Volume 102, Issue 1634, February 26, 2015

The Plano Rotary Club  
www.PlanoRotary.com

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### February 26

Paula Land -  
"Silence isn't Golden: How  
to Make the Most of your  
Hearing"

### March 5

Doug Stramel -  
"Pet Whispering: Releasing  
your Pet's Hidden Health  
Potential"

## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Lynne McLean	Feb 01
Jason Kramer	Feb 07
Karla Oliver	Feb 13
Doyle Dean	Feb 19
Jim McGee	Feb 20
Dennis Fuller	Feb 22
Chris Henry	Feb 23
Carrolyn Moebius	Feb 27
Kyle Walters	Feb 27



## BURSTING AT THE SEAMS

**S**ainted Editor felt extremely saintly, having brought four guests this day until he realized that **Myrtle Hightower** was responsible for at least 32! (For you math wizes, that's not "32 factorial." [2.63x10<sup>35</sup>] It only felt like it!)



**President Wonderful** cobbled us together at 12:09, cognizant of way too long a program that saw us released at 1:18! But, but, but he tried, and the program was one of the best, so **Sainted Editor** will treat him kindly. Earnest summoned **Phil Dyer** for the Pledge (minus **Scary Bob**...**Randy** filled in for him on photos, but we've used one from **Yoram** and another from wife, **Pat**). **W.T. Greer** offered up the (Lord's) Prayer, *a capella*, as Earnest noted, due to a failing iProduct and/or end-user. W.T. belted out the hymn to a round of applause.



**Karen Sheldon** was thanked for Greeting (with a coterie of candidates, presumably), and Earnest called **SERGEANT BARBERA** to the enormous task of welcoming the horde.

The lone Visiting Rotarian was actually another of Myrtle's guests, Collin County Sheriff **Terry Box** (*McKinney Sunrise*).



Chris Parr proudly introduced his guests, most of who visited to attend **Reeves Davis'** (husband of **Maribelle**) funeral directly after today's meeting. There was **Reggie Bryan** (weight trainer), **Irma Landis** (Plano political gadfly), wife **Patricia**

**Storck**, and potential member **Graciela Katzer** (*Plano International Festival* President).



**Nancy Humphrey** introduced a Real Estate Mogul **Mike Friedman** eager to capture Place 4 on the *PISD* Board of Directors. **Earl Simpkins** welcomed wife, **Barbara**, daughter, **Alice**, and (unrelated) **Pamela Ziegler Petty**. He also welcomed two of Myrtle's guests: **Fred** and **Mazzie Moses**. **Yoram Solomon** bade us greet **David Johnson**, and **Chris Phillips** introduced **D.J. Horn**.



Nathan permitted **Jim McGee** to "plea for sanity" and solicit "requests" for service once he's elected to the City Council. **Phil Dyer** requested "a couple of beers," in the tradition of **Old San Francisco** politics, but he was ignored. Jim's seeking to fill **Pat Gallagher's** Place 7 and claimed an endorsement therefrom to the effect, "Keep an Irishman here" in office. **Alex Johnson** piped up with a guest, **Cal Greer**.



continued on page 2

Noting “lots and lots” of Myrtle’s “distinguished” guests, Nathan asked them all to stand; half the room rose to their feet!

Yoram Solomon stumped for the March 30<sup>th</sup> Golf Tournament benefitting the PISD Education Foundation. He sought especially sponsors.

Earnest introduced today’s **MASTER OF CEREMONIES** to present our *Annual Black History Month* program, W.T. Greer, a man with “a world renowned voice.” But not, apparently, world renowned vision; W.T. pulled out “a new addition” to his wardrobe, glasses, to accompany his new suit, “the biggest I’ve ever had!” So far, he was preaching to the choir.



He said that our program theme was the Legacy of Black Heritage, but that there is “no other Culture except People.” Wisely, he shied away from introducing any significant number of Myrtle’s guests, but he couldn’t resist noting the presence today of **Art** and **Betty Stranz**. At



90, Art is the oldest living Mayor of Plano, and he received an ovation, the loudest from **Harry LaRosiliere**, Phil Dyer, **Pat Evans**, and **Florence Shapiro**, all of whom know first-hand the rigors of the office! W.T. said that he has been “in the Green Room” with “a lot of politicians,” and these were “real people.”



W.T. then introduced **Derrick Brookins**, the Director of the *Plano Senior Choir*. He invited the Choir to assemble and us to enjoy the ensemble.

Derrick provided drum accompaniment to the Choir’s rendition of an African-American spiritual, “Keep Your



*Lamp*” (trimmed and burning; the time is drawing nigh). Their professional delivery earned the group heart-felt applause.

For their second and final spiritual, the Choir wowed the audience with “*Daniel, Daniel, Servant to the Lord.*”

Apologizing implicitly, W.T. drew out a 4-page intro.

What follows is a catastrophically curtailed version of that biographical treatise.

**Carl S. Richie, Jr.**, is considered among Texas’ top power lobbyists. *Capitol Inside* recently ranked him as the 23<sup>rd</sup> top Hired Gun lobbyist. [He is] ranked...fourth...as the lead lobbyist for the energy giant TXU Energy.

He began his investigative career serving as a Fellow to a member of the United States Congress...Carl went on to serve as a legislative assistant for two state senators. He also served as Deputy Chief of Staff to Texas Governor **Ann W. Richards**. While serving in the Governor’s Office, he led the Governor’s Ethics Task Force, which established the creation of the Texas Ethics Commission. He later served as the agency’s Acting Director.

Carl is a skilled administrative litigator...He has participated in a wide array of contested and negotiated proceedings before state and federal regulatory agencies.

Currently, Carl serves as Vice Chair of the Board of Commissioners for the Housing Authority of the City of Austin. He has earned the highest awards given to public housing commissioners, including the **Elizabeth B. Wells** Memorial Award by the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO), the Commissioner’s Public Service Award from the Southwest Regional Council of NAHRO, and twice as Commissioner of the Year Award by the Texas Chapter of NAHRO.

B.S., TAMU Commerce, M.P.A., TSU, J.D., Univ. of Houston Law Center.

[He is currently] Board Member of Sendero Health Plans, Treasurer of Austin Area Research Organization, Board President of Southwest Housing Compliance Corporation, Commissioner of Austin Affordable Housing Corp. and Housing Authority of the City of Austin, member of Commissioners Committees for NAHRO, Southwest Regional Council of NAHRO, and Texas Chapter of NAHRO.



Carl said that he was “delighted with Rotary’s mission,” because it means we share with him a life of community service. He is proud of our elementary school mentoring as well as RI’s work in the eradication of Polio.

He recognized Fred and Florence, praising the latter for her work as former mayor, public school teacher, and Texas State senator. And for “giving me a hall pass” for missing a 3 pm meeting.

And he is proud of himself for having “aligned my business with my civic” activities without a conflict of interest. He adopts our *Service Above Self* motto.

Two days after Mayor **Kirk Watson** was voted into office in Austin, he made his first appointment. It was Carl, who was set to go on a well-deserved vacation at 5 pm, but got the call earlier in the day. It was to a stumbling Housing Authority, and, over his 14-year tenure, Carl has turned it into “the best agency in the country.” But when he was appointed, he asked his wife, “Why me?” She told him, “Your whole life has prepared you for this call to service.” She reminded him that he grew up in public housing. His academic thesis had been on Urban Home-steading. It involved the creation of a public agency, the Houston Housing Authority, which has become a model.

He had worked with Senator **Barney Frank** on agencies and commissions that had oversight on HUD. When he staffed a campaign for the Houston City Council he had worked for public housing. These were each reason enough for an appointment let alone all of them together.

Austin's Housing Authority is "*the Gold Standard for public housing, an award-winning program.*" It offers job training and scholarships, funneling 325 kids through college on \$825K in scholarships. It has developed Dropout Prevention programs where staffers call in at the homes of truants. This has resulted in the "*lowest dropout rate*" of any such program. And the after-school tutoring has raised GPAs.



In a marvelously innovative move, the authority purchased a shopping center, cutting the rent of client stores who hire project residents. The shops also offer deep discounts to low-income kids. Google Fiber has wired all 18 public housing developments, offering free wi-fi for three years. Ford Foundation grants and other fundraising have ensured that Austin is "*transforming public housing.*"

Graduates from the projects are entering the workplace and public service. The Chief of Staff for Austin's Metro was one such.

All of this is done under the philosophy that "*if you focus on others, you will receive more in return.*" He cited Rotary as an exemplar. "*I commend you and all that you do.*"

Then the program was turned over to **Doc Gibbs**, who synopsized his own personal history. "*Twenty <mumble mumble> years ago...when I was 10*" he was working on a degree in microbiology when someone hired him to sing. It sent him on the inexorable path to entertainment. But his studies "*of history at Harvard*" had led him to an "*understanding of Black History*" that he has been teaching to students in PISD.



He characterized our host, W.T., as "*tall, dark, and handsome, and I've got two of those.*" He praised "*Dr. Hightower*" as "*the real celebrity among us*" to a standing ovation of Myrtle.

Doc favored us with an analysis of the Negro Spiritual as having evolved from songs

sung in the cotton fields that didn't trouble the masters. But the drums at night were presumed to be inter-slave communication channels, so they were taken away.

Slaves had been indoctrinated with the religion of their masters, including stories about Moses "*who is here today.*" They knew about **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego** from the Book of Daniel. Doc claimed he'd heard it as "*Shadrach, Meshack and Abadnegro.*" But the tales of Life in the Hereafter were interpreted as emancipation from slavery, so the spirituals became guidebooks for escape. Like "*Steal Away Home, I ain't got long to stay here.*" And, in reference to carriages carrying slaves to freedom on the Underground Railroad, "*Swing low, Sweet Chariot, coming for to carry me home.*" **Harriet Tubman** cautioned to foil bloodhounds via "*Wade in the Water; God's gonna trouble the water.*" And her mission to thwart slavery was sung as "*Let My People Go,*" which refrain we were invited to chant.

Doc claimed he'd made us all "*honorary Black people*" with the Call and Response. Then, honoring Myrtle's insistence that he heat up the house, he launched into "*Tell Me What I Say,*" "*Well I Feel All Right Now,*" and, recommending that Myrtle rock in her seat, "*dancing cheek to cheek,*" he concluded with "*Down Home Blues*" and "*What a Wonderful World*" in proper **Satchmo** fashion. It earned him a standing ovation.

Earnest bestowed upon all the speakers a calendar that "*lasts into perpetuity.*" W.T. thanked the committee that structured the program, "*especially those that cooked the food.*"

**President Wonderful** led us in the Four-Way Test before releasing us to our own recognition.



### Guests & Visiting Rotarians

#### Guest

Graciela Katzer  
Ms. Landis  
Patricia Storck  
Reggie Brian  
David Johnson  
Pamela Zeigler Petty  
DJ Horn  
Cal Greer  
Mike Friedman

#### Guest of

Dr. Parr  
Dr. Parr  
Dr. Parr  
Dr. Parr  
Yoram Solomon  
Earl Simplkins  
Chris Phillips  
Alex Johnson  
Nancy Humphrey

#### Guests of Myrtle Hightower

Terry Box  
Sharon Bradley  
Mabel Caldwell  
Ed & Linda Drain  
Pat Evans  
Steve Fortenberry  
Ida Gephart  
James Jones  
MaryBeth King  
Harry Laresiliere  
Gaile Lewis

**New Member Proposal:** Maria Mott  
**Proposed By:** Randy Wright  
**Classification:** Signs and Graphics

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