



Spring
Weekly

Reader

Volume 60, Issue 122, March 20, 2014

The Plano Rotary Club
www.PlanoRotary.com

UPCOMING MEETINGS

March 20

Mayor Henry LaRosilliere-
"State of the City"

March 27

Terry Sumerlin-
"Common Sense for your
Life and Business."

April 3

Gerald Brence -
"Ox in the Culvert, A
Historical Fiction Novel"

April 10

Kirk Bell -
President
"Club Assembly"

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Ben Criste	Mar 01
Bill Wray	Mar 06
Mark Johnson	Mar 10
Myrtle Hightower	Mar 11
Jamie Schell	Mar 18
George Wong	Mar 28
Louise Davis	Mar 31
Bruce Glasscock	Mar 31



EVERY
ROTARIAN
EVERY
YEAR

♪ Let Me Entertain You ♪

WHEN the cat's away, the mice will play. Or, at least, the mice can chair the meeting. That was how VP Earnest **Mr. Wonderful**

Burke characterized his situation. But he didn't **BELL** us to attention. Like the opening of the Stock Market, that honor went to a guest organization, **Heroes on the Water**, in the person of its CEO and Executive Director, **Bob Pikna**.

Bob explained that with 2.5 million vets, 20% of whom suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, **Heroes on the Water** has its work cut out for it. The organization, which arranges kayak fishing to promote the wellness of mentally and physically wounded warriors, is hoping to reach as many as 100,000 vets by 2020.

Earnest then cajoled DGFL **Jan Sullivan** to Pray and **Rick Kasmiskie** to lead us in the Pledge. ("Thanks, Bob!") He credited the **Dynamic Duo** of **Cathy Tyler** and **Dave Bowman** with Greeting, and deferred the **SERGEANT-AT-ARMS** report, moving instead to wish **Jamie Schell** a **Happy Birthday**.

Scary Bob reported that as of the previous hour, **SNOWBALL EXPRESS**, which supports the children of fallen soldiers, received a \$1 million challenge grant from **Highland Capital Management**. Locally, their clients number 8,000; that's the number of Gold Star Children in DFW. Donor gifts will be matched 2 for 1 until Memorial Day.

Herb Hoxie had the unpleasant duty to report the declining health of former member and fellow resident of Herb's retirement home, **Lowell Culver**. His kidneys are failing and the situation "is not encouraging."



ing **Mark Thompson** and **Shawn Foster** (*Park Cities*). **Tino** introduced the former Chief of the volunteer Fire Department in the City of Parker, **Larry McMenamy**.



Sainted Editor was asked to model the new Spirit ware available to the Club, and he did so with such gusto that his table companions muttered, "Not that much attitude!"



John Parker was called upon to introduce the day's speaker, **Darrell Collins**, a member of the *DeSoto Rotary*, and...

...a professional variety entertainer who has traveled around the world teaching the performing arts and presenting family comedy shows. He has trained over 20,000 puppeteers in 49 states and over 50 countries.

He is currently the international director of a non-profit in DeSoto, TX, called Project HAND UP, which is dedicated to writing, producing, distributing, and implementing HIV Prevention and AIDS Education puppet and magic shows in East Africa. These shows are designed to reach large audiences with basic health science education that would otherwise not be taught due to their sensitive subject matter.

Our speaker spent five months in Kenya last year and looks forward to sharing with you the inception and direction of the charity he helped found.

For his first trick...Darrell strolled to his **Bag of Tricks** and picked out three cutlasses, dropping one near his toe while explaining that we'd nothing to fear because he'd done "this hundreds of times." Presumably he had meant he had missed his toe hundreds of times. Having sat with **Ken Rob-**

continued on page 2



The market for such commodities consists of everyone from Police Departments (MacGruff, the Crime Dog) to Evangelicals who teach Sunday School Bible lessons. He says that the appeal of puppets doesn't end with childhood; *"even adults enjoy Sesame Street."*

He met a *University of Kentucky* Chemistry Professor who had developed a simple, inexpensive ceramic filter to cleanse drinking water. But it was *"useless if the users don't understand biology."* If, for example, they put clean water in dirty containers, the advantage has been lost. So he had to teach them about microbes.

Darrell said he's traveled to China, Cambodia, the Congo, all the *"dangerous places that begin with the letter 'C'."* And he teaches *"uncomfortable"* lessons to large groups by putting them into a story. For example, he might use legerdemain *"to make dirty water look clean quickly"* to get the point of filtration over to his audience.

To make his point to us, he walked up to what he thought to be a *"law enforcement official,"* who quickly assured him that he was with the Fire Department. **Brian Crawford** wasn't going to tolerate misidentification with **Greg Rushin!**

He explained to Ken and the *Phantom Crotchettienne* that, when he juggled the cutlasses, they were perfectly safe because *"they land way in the back where the squishy Rotarians sit."* Then, since his saber rattling wasn't deemed sufficiently unnerving, he upped the ante, tying a yellow bandana around his eyes, then coyly slipping it up into a headband.

As he slung the three knives into their controlled arc, the *Phantom Crotchettienne* actually paused in her tatting, so it must have had its intended effect. He explained that he juggled *"to grab your attention so I get your permission to speak about something of importance."*

(You know that someday Lori will follow her husband's petite footsteps into the Presidency, at which point we'll all be treated to the image of her presiding over our meetings while knitting.)

Scary Bob danced around, angling for a good action shot, while Darrell encouraged him to take a picture, and *Sainted Editor* suggested use of a flash. Darrell explained that being a juggler and puppeteer really endeared him to the young ladies who pestered him with questions like, *"Are you single?"*

He explained that he's associated with the largest factory for puppets in the U.S. in DeSoto!



Darrell showed him a magic trick that began with a pink handkerchief representing clean lungs tossed in a bag. When he added a fake cigarette, Darrell had **Wally Reed** draw out the handkerchief which had become a polluted lung. Such was his reputation in the field, that the Cambodian government called him to the country to make similar, easily-digested presentations about Bird Flu.



Pondering the best approach, Darrell decided to use karaoke, popular in Cambodia. Indeed he employed the best karaoke singer in Cambodia (which, un-Rotarian-like, he characterized as “like finding the best ballerina in Beaumont”) to create songs with lyrics like “if you love me, you’ll feed me water from the blue well not the red.”

But his mentor and collaborator died of a heart attack at age 43, so Darrell soldiered on alone.

A Zambian comedian wanted to do a puppet show about AIDS after having lost 17 of his classmates to the disease. So Darrell moved to East Africa where he found the populace to be 81% Christian. Pastors had been preaching about the epidemic, but were having a hard time getting past such misinformation as “AIDS is a curse from God.” And that you can’t get it from your husband. The problem wasn’t that the Pastors couldn’t teach, it was that no one wanted to hear. So Darrell made a program to run on *Good Morning, Kenya*.

He pulled out a puppet who promptly declared today’s roast beef to be good, asking, “Ken, why are you laughing?” The room became preternaturally quiet, and Darrell laughed, “Look at you, adults. You’re transfixed. There’s no ‘party chat’ as a couple of minutes ago. This is not TV, you know; I can hear you.”

While in Nairobi, he lived in a home with 7 local women as “*Snow White and the Seven Kikuyu Women*.” He spent his money on condoms (not for his companions, mind you), testing kits, and antivirals. But he found the condoms unused because everybody knew “*the government puts AIDS into the condoms!*” And the

test kits were similarly useless because “*if I get tested, everyone will think I’m a whore!*” So he started his NGO.

His 20 volunteers can reach 1/2 million people per year. They include the provost of a Clown College in Garland! Darrell has raised enough money to apply for a \$100,000 global grant from Rotary International. His script writers once worked on MacGruff stories. His editor is the *Dreamworks* “punch up” guy. He gets the Bob Hope of East Africa to convert the dialog into Swahili. Then he travels there to train the puppeteers.

He referred to a robotic lion, Lionel, who sings stories to East African audiences. DG Ean once asked him if it could sing the Four-Way Test, he responded “no,” but then thought why not? So Lionel sang us the Rotarian Creed.

Darrell offered miniature Lionels for up to \$20, then, for his final trick, took out three different lengths of rope representing Volunteers, Donors, and Contacts. Miraculously, they all became of the same length before returning each to its original size.

Earnest thanked **Dennis Fuller** for his **Birthday Check** and presented Darrell with “the renown” Rotary Clock before reluctantly recognizing **FLASH**.

The True Green Irishman told us that only three types of men fail to understand women: the young, the old, and the middle-aged.

Dragging Lionel to the lectern, Earnest led us in the Four-Way Test and dismissed the assembly at 1:03.



Guests & Visiting Rotarians

Guest

Larry McMenamy

Guest Of

Tino Trujillo

Visiting Rotarian

Mark Thomason
Shawn Foster

Home Club

Park Cities
Park Cities

New Member Proposal

Proposed member: Edward J. Williams
Classification: Retired
Proposed By: Bradley Keith

Proposed member: Mike McCullough
Classification: Men’s Salon
Proposed By: Kirk Bell

AWARDS:

2013 Citizen of the Year

Dr. Myrtle Hightower

Huffines Auto Dealerships

Huffines Auto Dealerships

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