



Fall Weekly

Reader

Volume 136, Issue 196, November 19, 2015

The Plano Rotary Club
www.PlanoRotary.com

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Nov 19th

Frank Turner -
"History and Future of
Downtown Plano"

Nov 26th

No Meeting

Dec 3rd

Jeannie Alpert -
"PISD Foundation"



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Allan Murovitz Nov 03

Lissa Smith Nov 03

Olin Jaye Nov 05

Martin Jackson Nov 12

Anthony Miller Nov 20

Patti Schwartz Nov 29



FIELD TRIP



STEPHEN VITASEK (*Plano Metro*)

fed us our camping out lunch (**Rose Catering**) today at *Oak Point Park*.

Kelly thanked him, but he didn't attend. Had he, he'd've been our lone Visiting Rotarian. No one else could have found us.

We dined upon chips and tamales washed down with iced tea. So we knew we weren't at *Gleneagles*. But the view made up for it. The lake, the nature trails, the woods all made us pine (no pun intended) for a Socratic Seminar beneath the trees. **Amy Fortenberry** would probably have obliged had we a proper sound system installed. She's an outdoorsy-type by her own admission.



PRESIDENT PAPERWEIGHT asked who present had to travel the least distance to attend today. It was a tie between **Janis Allman** and Chief **Sam Greif**, who "*lives across the street*". Kelly summoned **David Bowman** to offer the Invocation and **Casey Stewart** to lead us in the Pledge. The day's speaker, Amy Fortenberry, served as Greeter, showing off the City's newest nature preserve in a surfeit of pride.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS Nathan Barbera surveyed the beautiful weather outside and told us how lucky we were not to be meeting in Colorado from which he recently returned

where they're enjoying 23°F. Then he got down to business.



Chris Parr introduced **MoneyGram's** Sen. Dir. of Advanced Risk & Regulatory Projects, **Praful** (pronounced "Pruffle") **Mainker** (pronounced "Mine-ker") here to buttonhole Amy about Cricket practice. And **Jeff Fraumenheim** bade us welcome his Frau, **Carol**.

Nathan called out **FANTASY FOOTBALL** newbie **Charles Milby** for his arguably perfect 0-2 vs. **Earnest's** 7-2. **Ean** managed to populate a team with players who aren't even playing; time to trade, Ean.

Kelly reminded us of our **Holiday Party** (10 Dec.) and **Angel Tree** (19 Dec., but see the back page of this *Weekly Reader* for preparation dates). Then he called upon **Rick Horne** to introduce Amy.

Amy Fortenberry has worked professionally in Parks & Rec for 25 years in a variety of areas including special events, athletics, summer camps, aquatics, recreation programming, and golf course management prior to being appointed as Director in Plano in 2000.

Amy is supported by a talented full-time staff of 199 employees who are responsible for more than 5,100 acres of parks, medians, athletic sites, recreation centers, pools, public buildings grounds, and special programs. In addition, she oversees another 42 full-time employees at the Convention Center and Visit Plano, the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

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By building relationships with community partners and instilling financial performance goals, Plano is able to provide outstanding services for its residents at one of the lowest tax rates in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. In an effort to stay connected with daily operations, Amy maintains her Lifeguard Instructor Certification and teaches an occasional lifeguard class and CPR/AED classes to City employees.

Amy earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Recreation from Texas Tech University. She also was a graduate of the first class at NRPA's Director School and one of the first professionals in the country to pass the Certified Park and Recreation Executive (CPRE) exam.

Amy thanked Rick for the stellar introduction and gave a nod to his status as a Parks & Rec. Board Chairman!

Her first act was to tussle with the mic declaring that this shakedown of the meeting room pointed to the need to "deaden the acoustics." And we know that will be done because Amy works out of this building, built with funds from a 2005 Bond Election...but not immediately. The "economic downturn" (read "recession") the world experienced in 2008 put construction on hold. (Thank you, **Bill Clinton**, for signing the death knell of the Glass-Steagall Act.) But that just meant a saving on maintenance of operation of a non-existent facility. ☺

The 800 acres were purchased long before (1982), and the hiking trails received a current endorsement from Jeff Fraunheim who is taking Carol on a hike this very after-



noon. The 22K sq. ft. building was designed to facilitate corporate retreats, social functions, entertainment venues, and it boasts a catering kitchen, a fact to which Stephen Vitasek can attest. There is a board room "on the other side" (of the entrance from our meeting rooms A & B). That side houses staff offices too.

She pointed out an X-box generation infotainment pad which tells the history of the place with descriptions of the flora and fauna to be expected along the 3.5 miles of hard trails and 5 miles of soft. The park is linked under US75 to Bluebonnet and Chisholm Trails.

Amy "likes the outdoors" and so was understandably dismayed at a patron's comment that she preferred photos and videos of Nature to encountering it along park trails, saying, "I don't want Nature to touch me!" Fortunately, that's likely to be the minority opinion, and there's more than Nature to appreciate anyway.



Oak Point hosts festivals and musical events at its amphitheater. It even mounts fireworks displays which "respect Nature;" **Sainted Editor** isn't quite sure how that is possible. Maybe they're silenced.

She said that nearby could be found the County's "greatest display of wildflowers." And she encouraged us to peruse the **LEISURE GUIDES** scattered across our tables. We are free to "give the gift of a class or fitness opportunity." She pointed to its page 36 upon which was chronicled the "outdoor adventure program" including star watches, bug watches, and kayaking. She's trying to draw up regulations which will permit patrons to bring their own kayaks and canoes to row the lakes and rivers. She cited "paddle trails" connecting to Rowlett Creek, terminating at "the liquor store on 14th." (**Bruce** winced.)



Amy told us that the park was a work-in-progress. She's seeking improvements in parking and a "natural playground," where the facilities aren't made of plastic and metal but good, old splintery wood with rock berms. There are waterways to explore, moms to terrify, lots to do.

She's even contemplating ZIP lining, and suggests that we check it out at GoApe.com

The park is certified by Audubon for its care of wildlife like the armadillos and bobcats. There'll be camping for scout troops and (eventually) for families. (I wonder if the homeless need apply?)

John Caldwell asked about "virgin Blackland prairie," and was told "it's a myth," but there is a prairie environment "over by the darn, we don't say 'dam.'" Some areas of the park are off-limits for the sake of preservation.

Rick Maucieri asked about the relation of the park to the once *Los Rios Country Club*. The City purchased *Los Rios*, and *Oak Point* links to *Bob Woodruff* which links to *Los Rios*. Funds will eventually be found to rehabilitate the *Lost Rios* facilities.

Nathan asked about (mountain) bike trails. Amy said all trails are purely pedestrian at present, but a bike trail might be in the future, terminating at *Moore Park*.

Earnest Burke asked about emergency stations. There are none in the park, but 9-1-1 knows about locations in the park, marked on the pavement.

Amy didn't know the depth of the lake, but she did know that it was stocked with catfish and bluegill with bass to be added later when everything else is grown up enough to defend itself from them.

Kelly wanted to know about park elevations, and Amy referred him to the relief map.

Janis Allman asked about cultural asset surveys. Amy said they were unnecessary for park creation but are required for building construction, parking, trails, etc.



Yoram Solomon inquired casually about allowances for radio-controlled aircraft. She said that he had an advocate in her husband who shares his madness. Since the park is located in a residential area, home safety would dictate. The City has itself uses drones to check for flooded park areas, so there's hope.

Rick Horne asked about its size compared to New York's *Central Park*. Amy says it's close, but together with the contiguous *Pecan Hollow*, it exceeds *Central Park*.

Charles BH Milby asked about access to deer in the park. Amy says that's a question from a *bow hunter*! The park sees a migratory deer population and the concomitant coyotes and bobcats that follow them. Parks & Rec. is concerned for the corridors open to the migrants. But in response to Charles' question, archery competitions are a possibility.



David Bowman said that *MapQuest* didn't yet know about Oak Point Park. Satellite maps only show it under construction. Amy said that *Google Maps* work, and that she would inform *MapQuest*. When the trail loop is named, then it will show up on computer maps.

Doyle Dean asked about *Jack Carter Pool*. Amy said that the City was "relocating it" and that it would reopen next summer.

Kelly offered her our *Killer Paperweight* and pointed out that she'd be willing to take any interested party on a tour of the facilities after the meeting. Then he told us to "*police your tables*," break them down, and stack the chairs. David Bowman mentioned a meeting the following Saturday at 1 pm on the Chamber of Commerce building regarding next year's Nicaragua trip. Kelly led us in the 4-Way Test and closed the meeting at 12:55.



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Please consider joining us with the support of your personal time or financial resources to help make the holidays brighter.

This year, we are partnering with Barron Elementary, Samaritan Inn and YMCA to provide a holiday meal, Walmart gift card and children's toys & necessities. Mr. & Mrs. Claus (aka Ean & Jan) will arrive to celebrate with the children which will put a smile on your face and a tear in your eye.

Shopping:
Thursday Dec 10th @ 7:30am; Walmart at 1700 Dallas Pkwy near Park Blvd.

Wrapping:
Tuesday Dec 15th @ 5:00pm to 6:30pm; BTH Bank at 1801 Preston Rd south of Park Blvd.

Party:
Saturday Dec 19th @ 2:00pm to 4:00pm; BTH Bank at 1801 Preston Rd south of Park Blvd.
(volunteer times may vary due to preparation and clean up)

Please email Camille.ussery@bthbank.com if you would like to volunteer your time.