



SPRING
Weekly

Reader

Volume 22, Issue 14, April 21st, 2022

The Plano Rotary Club
www.PlanoRotary.com

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

April 21
Nancy Humphrey
Plano ISD Financial Overview

April 28
Gene Davenport
RI Unity Programs
4 Way Test

May 5
Carole Greisdorf & Bob Kehr
Leadership Plano

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Daniel Askari	Apr 04
Rutledge Haggard	Apr 05
Robert Reed	Apr 07
Marco Solano Diaz	Apr 16
Chip Stewart	Apr 17
Porcha Maten	Apr 19



Nuts to You!

Sainted Editor was a Mathematical Chemist; surely that qualifies him to pontificate on all matters academic. So here goes: while the Bulletin was correct in this regard, our email notifications substituted genitive singular for nominative plural. Thus Pistachios became Pistachio's, leaving the puzzled viewer to think "Nuts for Pistachio's" what? Color? Taste? Nutrients?

He Who Shall Be Named Joe, called the camaraderie to end at 12:11, anointing **John Priest** for the Invocation and (now present photographer) **Peggy Fenwick** for the Pledge. Speaker **Bob Kehr** had brought additional audience



in the person of **D'Andre Allegra**, an Assistant Vice President of **FirstUnited Bank**, a Faith-based Financial Institution (so keenly aware of Biblical usury injunctions). **FirstUnited** cares for your financial, physical, mental, and spiritual health: a full-service, one-stop shop. And it deals with group finances as well.

Porcha Maten offered to send us link to the **Facebook Pie-in-the-Face** event which raised \$130 cash and an as yet unknown amount of credit sales.



Janelle Twyford-Silvis, in recognition of the role played by a Legacy Academy volunteer during our Texas Blues and Red Hots BBQ, gave Porcha a gift card to 1/2 Price Books to be used to stock the Academy's neighborhood library.

Although AWOL, **John Caldwell** was here in spirit as we watched two 4-Way Test Speech Contestants strut their stuff. Judging sheets were distributed for the 2nd contestant. The 1st was anxious about making new friends when she moved here from India. Her family had told her, "Don't talk to non-Asians." Her thesis today was the removal of stereotypes. She maintained that there are no "good stereotypes" worth saving. Even positive ones like "Asians are good at academics" need to go because it suggests that they can't be good in other areas of endeavor. She quoted **Nelson Mandela**, "We slaughter one another in the stereotypes and mistrust that lin



ger in our heads, and the words of hate we spew from our lips.” And she suggested that “some have lost the necessary trust.” Fortunately, she has taught herself to not be “judgmental toward someone you’ve never met,” and, as a result, she’s made lots of friends from “all sorts of people.”

The 2nd speaker asked us to remember the taste of a PB&J sandwich, the 1st picture we ever drew, and the 1st speech we ever gave. (That taxed the Geriatric Club of Plano!) Being far, far younger, she did better. She recalled “practice, practice, practicing” for her 1st speech only to have it evaporate from her mind when it came time to deliver it. She said that public speaking was “the #1 fear in the world!” But folks who don’t master it find their wages reduced by 15% (no attribution). And when polled, 40% would refuse to talk. She was one of them, so her parents took her to an after-school speaking club. There she discovered herself not to be alone in the terror. She said that her confidence improved reducing what is known as “the Spirit of the Stairs,” when you remember after the fact what you should have said. She found people reacted positively to her when she engaged with them. (Imagine that!) And public speaking “changes the way you listen,” enabling you to get feedback from others.

Janelle asked us to make comments upon any low scores we had given, saying, “That feedback goes back to the students.” **Joe** said he was favorably impressed with “eye contact.” **Gary Garza** was impressed with “speaking *with* someone [as opposed to] *at* someone.” **Maria Mott** liked the transitioning, while John Priest appreciated the speaker’s pauses “to allow the audience to think.”

While Janelle introduced Bob Kehr, **Nancy Humphrey** asked whether we would get a rating sheet to score Bob’s talk! Undeterred, Janelle noted that Bob works in IT but, far from that, he also owns a nut farm (larger than a nut house).

Bob commented that this talk was requested just so he could bring some pistachio product. He also denied owning the ranch but said that he “married into it.” His wife’s family started the California pistachio grove in 2009.



Pistachios are native to Iran and Afghanistan, where they’ve been cultivated for millennia. However, he ate his first one only in 2003!

The growing cycle in their native land is one year on and one year off. So they harvest every other year. With a different climate, the cycle is different in CA, with rich years followed by lean.

The nuts were introduced into the U.S. in 1854, and the first commercial crop was harvested in 1929. (The Great Depression was coincidental.) Production has doubled in the last 20 years.

And they’re called ranches not orchards or farms. (So Bob herds his groves? That I’d love to see, Bob! A pistachio wrangler!)

Pistachios aren't pollinated by bees but by the wind. So the trees are planted 20' apart in rows 20' apart in CA. In the Middle East, they grow on bushes rather than trees, so they're planted closer together, harvesting more per acre. And there they dye the nuts **RED** to hide the stains which would otherwise cause them to be graded down. The U.S. doesn't do that.



The trees require 3 acre-feet of water annually. So irrigation is mandatory.

Two crews harvest 20 acres in 4 hours, shaking the trees just enough to release the nuts that are ready but not so much as to damage the blossoms. Machinery grades the harvest. Bob ran a couple of videos of the harvesting process. Each harvester gathers about 1/2 ton of nuts. Nuts which miss the harvester and land on the ground are left for the squirrels, the primary pests. The insect pests are controlled with pheromone treatments that interfere with mating.

Bob's family's farm is called Oro Verde (green gold?), and it is managed by another agency. It's located in the San Joaquin Valley which **Joe** said is also home to CA raisins. Bob said that his parents were Okies and harvested raisins (well, grapes

that became raisins). And his wife was at the ranch as he was speaking, overseeing the management team, no doubt. But the "**nutfill**" starts in August-September.

Indeed "**nutfill**" is part of pistachio vocabulary that includes "**blanks**" (empty shells), "**splits**" (open shells), "**inshell**" (closed shells, as opposed to "**inshallah**" [God willing]), "**stain**," "**insect damage**," "**stick-tight**" (nuts that won't fall), "**green weight**" vs. "**dry weight**," and "**GAAP**" to which Nancy piped up, "**Generally Accepted Accounting Practices!**" Bob corrected her, "**Generally Accepted Agricultural Principles.**"

Bob next offered door prizes to those answering his after-lecture quiz! **Kathy Taylor** won for wind pollination. Nancy won for a corrected GAAP. Someone else won for knowing the harvest is a billion lbs. annually.



Mary Jo Dean asked how many pistachio ranches there were in the U.S. Bob told her that there are 10s of thousands of acres. **Johnny Lewis** asked about the machinery, and Bob said that the management company owns that. **Mark Geller** asked about tree lifetime, and Bob estimated that they replace 3-4 per year.

Nancy Humphrey said she'll destroy any rating sheets before speaking. **Joe** led us in the 5-Way Test and permitted us to run at 1:03.



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Allegra D'Andra	Bob Kehr

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