

Rotary
Club of
Charlotte



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

December 21, 2021

2021- 2022 Board Members

President Carol Hardison

Pres Elect William Bradley

Past Pres Jerry Coughter

Secretary Colleen Brannan

Treasurer Edwin Peacock

Exec Sec Christine Cipriano

Directors 2021-2022

Patrick Baker

Bill Bartee

Suzanne Bledsoe

Kim McMillan

Rex Reynolds

Ranjay Sarda

John zumBrunnen

Directors 2021-2023

Ann Clark

Ellison Clary

Jesse Hite

Warren Kean

Vanessa Stolen

Membership Laura Little

Foundation Joe Morris

Programs Elly Clary

Best Christmas Meeting Ever!

By Rick Handford

Laura Little, Charlotte Rotary member and Executive Director of [Laura Little Theatrical Productions](#), put together a great Christmas program for us, featuring performers from *Opera Carolina*, Jessica Borgnis (piano player, singer, performer and teacher of same), and members of our club narrating three historic Christmas stories.

Before the start of the performance, president Carol Hardison acknowledged and thanked the hotel staff that take such good care of us on a weekly basis.

Jessica started things off singing *It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas* while accompanying herself on the piano. Then **Kim Brattain** told the story of Colonel Hal Halverson, a pilot working to supply Berlin during the 1948 Berlin Airlift. Recognizing that the children of Berlin were suffering from the food shortages, he collected candy from fellow servicemen and using parachutes made from handkerchiefs he dropped them from his plane. There was such appreciation that he continued the air drops on a weekly basis. When the news media got the story and told it back in the state, the public started sending donations and cards for the children, and the program was given official support and named *Operation Little Vittles*, a subset of the food deliveries to Berlin known as *Operation Vittles*. Before the airlift was ended in September of 1949, the operation had delivered more than 23 tons of candy via 250,000 parachutes.

William Bradley then told the story of the WWI Christmas truce between the Allies and the Germans on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day in 1914. Four singers from *Opera Carolina* then sang a beautiful song about the event.

This was followed by **Kim Brattain** reading *One Solitary Life*, excerpted from a sermon by James Allen Francis in July of 1926, after which Jessica Borgnis sang *Mary Did you Know?* while again accompanying herself on the piano.

Phil Volponi then introduced the members of the quartet from Opera Carolina and asked for our support of their upcoming season, which will have them back in person for the first time (formally) since the COVID lockdown of 2020.

Chris Kemper then took the stage and led the Club in a singalong of *Joy to the World*, *Deck the Halls*, and *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*. At this point, **Edwin Peacock** called out to note that Thomas Moore was in the audience and to get him to sing for us. Thomas sang *White Christmas* in his usual inimitable style to much acclaim.

President Carol Hardison closed the meeting by wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year while the hotel staff delivered trays of Christmas cookies to each table. Highest attendance by Rotary members and guests since we resumed in-person meetings last summer helped to make this the Best Christmas Meeting Ever!

*A recording of the program is available here: <https://vimeo.com/659108126>

The program introduction begins at 12:50 minutes.