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## Air Venturers: Ray Goes to Puerto Vallarta and Denver

*by Mike Ely and Linda Street-Ely*

Here's our second installment from Ray Hankamer's fond memories working for Houston's air travel club, Air Venturers. If you missed the first story and a bit about Ray, dig out last week's Gazette or read it on our Substack page, link below.

**Ray:** This story is about a trip to Puerto Vallarta. As our full plane crested the high mountain range that squeezed the then small fishing village against the Pacific Ocean, the pilot came on the loudspeaker: "Ladies and gentlemen, we just contacted the airport tower and have been told that the airport is closing and is not equipped for night landing. It has no runway lights. But they are making accommodations Mexican-style for us to land." Oooops! It was pitch dark outside, and no one had checked on their airport before we left Houston. The plane continued its descent in the dark. More adult beverages were called for and served. Wheels down as the plane slowed to land. Our lives were literally in the hands of the pilots.

We landed, and as we rolled to a stop, we saw along the single runway a few jeeps with



their headlights on and a few kerosene pots, smoking away, giving out enough light to frame the edges of the tarmac. We waited for the stairs to be rolled up, and believe me everyone was ready to deplane. But the stairs remained where they were. The pilot came back on the speaker to say there were negotiations going on to the use the stairs since they belonged to Mexicana Airlines, the sole commercial airline serving the airport, and they were not happy that a large charter flight had brought in so many passengers. Without a doubt, some cash was dropped from the cockpit window, and finally the stairs were pushed up, and a thankful lot of passengers emerged into the humid coastal air.

Here's another one. After a fun weekend on the brand-

new slopes of Vail, Colorado, which had just opened a year before, we boarded the plane at Stapleton Field (Denver) for our return to Houston. The pilots started the engines one by one. In the sub-zero temperatures, the fourth engine of the Lockheed Constellation would not start. We were asked to deplane on the same roll-up stairs we had just used and return to the waiting room while the pilots tried to start the fourth engine. We deplaned with the sub-freezing prop blast chilling us all as we walked back down the stairs we had just mounted. From the warmth of the waiting area, we saw the plane taxi away and head for a runway, where it took off empty with only three engines. The pilots landed with four engines running this time. They explained to us that once airborne, they had windmilled the recalcitrant, silent engine, and then changed the pitch of the blades, which spun it fast enough to start. We again boarded, this time with four engines pounding frigid air back toward the stairs as we climbed back aboard.

*ElyAirLines.substack.com*



Happy club members at one of our island destinations.

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## Medicare help at Liberty library Thurs., May 2

LIBERTY - Zelda Earvin, Benefits Counselor for the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) Area Agency on Aging, will return to the Liberty Municipal Library on Thurs., May 2, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. to answer questions about Medicare eligibility and benefits. She will be available to meet one-on-one with disabled and older Texans to compare and help choose the best Medicare plan that is offered.

Ms. Earvin will explain the difference between traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage Plans (Medicare Part C), and she will also assist seniors as they choose from among prescription plans (Part D), that are available to beneficiaries.

Sessions are held on a first come, first served basis. This invaluable service is offered at no cost to participants. She will be available on the first Thursday of every month.

The Liberty Municipal Library is located at 1710 Sam Houston Street. For more information, call the library at 936-336-8901.

## Horsemanship clinic Sat., May 4

LIBERTY COUNTY - On Sat., May 4, an Adult and Youth Horsemanship Clinic will be held beginning at 5 p.m. and continuing until completed. The clinic is open to all ages. The location for the clinic is 1780 CR 301 N. in Dayton. Instructor for the clinic is John Williams, Purina ambassador and horsemanship clinician who is successful in multiple disciplines. The clinic is presented by the Liberty County Adult Horse Committee through Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

The clinic is limited to 15 riders who must reserve a spot to participate. The cost is \$40 per rider and \$10 to audit (watch/learn). TAHC/NEG Coggins required. Please bring your own seating. No alcohol or pets will be allowed.

To register, contact Roy Flora at 936-334-3230.



SONJA BRUZAUSKAS



TALI MORGULIS

## Vocal performance at St. Stephen's, May 5

LIBERTY - German mezzo soprano Sonja Bruzauskas, accompanied by Israeli-American pianist Dr. Tali Morgulis, will present a vocal concert at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 2041 Trinity Avenue. The concert will consist of German, French and American art songs and

will take place Sun., May 5, at 5 p.m. A reception in the parish hall will follow.

This concert is sponsored by the Fine Arts Society of Liberty, Texas, (FASOLT), and is open to the public. FASOLT brings art and music to the community, takes students to operas and symphonic concerts, and awards scholarships to students studying the arts, choir and band camps. FASOLT is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

For more information, call Jim Sterling, president of FASOLT, at 936-336-3716.

### FLAG RETIREMENT

LIBERTY - Liberty VFW Post 5621 will hold a flag retirement Sat., May 18, at the basketball pavilion at the Liberty City Park from noon until 4 p.m. Anyone who has a flag to retire can place them in the flag depositories located in Dayton at The Crossroads or in the designated box located near First Liberty Bank in Hardin. Flags may also be left at the VFW Hall at 1520 N. Main Street. The public is invited to attend.

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**Charla Reid**  
Pediatric Nurse Practitioner



Charla was born in Houston and was raised in Kinder, Louisiana. She attended Louisiana College to get her RN degree and then went on to work at Boston Children's Hospital. While there she realized her passion to become a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner and was able to accomplish that at Texas Woman's University shortly after. Charla brings 19 years of Pediatric specific experience to our clinic. Her family includes her husband Will, her teenage children Christopher, Charlie and Ellie, and two fur babies Bear and Bella. She stated, "It is my pleasure to be involved in this wonderful community clinic. I am looking forward to meeting all of you and your precious children. My goal is to give you a convenient, accessible, and reliable place to not only aid your children in illness but to also maintain great health. My philosophy in treating children is to give them the level of care and consideration I want for my own children. I take into consideration every symptom and, through physical exam and testing, determine their diagnosis and proper treatment. If I am ever unsure of a diagnosis I do not hesitate to seek a second opinion or refer to specialists. I believe education is one of our greatest tools for success in life. Therefore, I stay up-to-date with evidence-based diagnosis/treatment through today's medical journals and educational conferences. I am a believer in parent and patient education as well. Please don't ever feel that you can't ask me questions about your child's health or illness. As a parent, I feel we should be empowered with knowledge and continually learn more about caring for our children's health."

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**For an appointment, call (936) 336-9175**

**1201 NORTH TRAVIS STREET - LIBERTY**

## Last day to vote, May 4

*Continued from Page A-1*

sition 6 Incumbent Rachel Odell is not running and voters will choose between Jeff Ryan and Bruce George.

In Dayton three council positions will be on the ballot. Position 1 voters can choose between Sherial L. Lawson (incumbent) and Harry L. Barnes Jr. Running for Position 2 are Alvin Burress, Janette Goulder-Frick (incumbent), Troy Barrett, and Sarah Vickery. Position 3 candidate is Incumbent John Headrick and he is unopposed.

In the City of Ames, terms of three city council members have expired. Council Position 1 has Incumbent Michael J. Trahan II running unopposed. Council Position 2 Incumbent Elizabeth "Liz" Hardy is being challenged by Cornelius Gilmore. Position 4 Incumbent Alfred Lee Freeman Jr. is opposed by Eric "Tebo" Morris.

The Devers ISD school board has two positions whose terms end in May 2024. Position 6 Trustee candidates are Gradee Davis (incumbent) and Frankie Moeller. The Position 7 Trustee Matt Horelica is running unopposed.

Hull Fresh Water Supply District has three Director positions opening up. Choices are (choose one, two or three) DeeAnn Ard, Marvin Fregia, Bill Long, and Jim Parker.