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Dinner Table taking reservations

Before we get too deep into January, I should say Happy New Year to all of you.

And thanks to everyone who called me at the paper and sent holiday cards, cookies and candy. You're so sweet and thoughtful.

For you, I have a small helping of mull-again stew — updates on a couple of items that many of you have called or written about.

Before that, however, you should know that you can stop saying Happy New Year any time you feel like it.

I don't know about you, but I find myself saying that to everybody I encounter, and I don't



JAMES RAGLAND

know when to quit.

Well, I was chatting with Valencia McClure, proprietor of a public relations firm, and I asked her when do public relations pros stop saying Happy New Year.

"It's like the first two weeks" of January, she said. "After that, it kind of fades on off."

I've got a feeling that many people stop saying it when their Christmas credit card bills arrive, and that would be around the middle of the month, too.

Now here's the mull-again:

■ No matter how many times we mention the Dallas Dinner Table event, I always get multiple phone calls from people wanting to know if it's too late to sign up or needing to get contact information.

That's why I called Ms. McClure, a spokeswoman for the Dallas Dinner Table, to see exactly how the event is tracking this

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JAMES RAGLAND Dallas Dinner Table is still taking diverse reservations

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year.

The bottom line is that you can still sign up to join in on one of the dinners, and you also can volunteer to facilitate or host a dinner in your home or restaurant.

As you might recall, the dinners are designed to bring folks from diverse backgrounds together in groups of eight to 10 people. You break bread, share life stories and discuss experiences that you've had with people from other ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

I went to one last year and had a really good time getting to know my dinner partners.

The event will be held again on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which this year falls on Jan. 17. The dinners begin at 6 p.m.

Last year, a record 850 people participated, and organizers hope to attract 1,500 or so this year. You can go to [dinnertable.com to sign up, or you can call 1-888-706-1616. You also can e-mail Ms. McClure at \[mcclurev@mcclurepr.com\]\(mailto:mcclurev@mcclurepr.com\).](http://www.dallas</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Monday is the deadline, so hurry up!

Ms. McClure emphasized that organizers especially want to encourage more ethnic minorities to participate.

"We always like to stress that this is inclusive of everyone," she said. "Because it's held on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, people think it's just for African-Americans and Anglos."

■ The final mull-again item concerns Imagine the Impossible, a nonprofit dance workshop outfit that provides after-school programs in Dallas.

I mentioned in August that Mary Johnson, who founded and runs that organization, is in dire need of a building with hardwood floors.

Well, she's gotten some good responses, including from a community college that wants to

partner with her by allowing some of Ms. Johnson's ballet students to visit the college twice a week for more training.

Now, she not only needs a building, she needs a bus that will enable her to transport the kids to Brookhaven College.

Let me tell you, I don't know the first thing about ballet. But I visited Ms. Johnson and some of her classes last summer, and they're doing remarkably important work. Any doubt about that would be erased if you could see the look on those kids' faces.

You can contact Imagine the Impossible at 214-752-8470 or send e-mail to ImagineWorkshop@yahoo.com. The Web site is ImaginetheImpossible.org.

I should point out that the group, after my visit, sent me a nice box of chocolates for Christmas.

Makes me wish I had a building or a bus to give them.

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IMAGINE THE IMPOSSIBLE™... DANCE WORKSHOP

"Establishing Young Visionaries through the Artistry of Excellence"