



# Opti - Topics

Bulletin of the Optimist Club of Huntsville

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## Opening

A large turnout of twenty Optimists and three guests attended our meeting at the Downtown Holiday Inn today. Our guests were Marlene Renz, Elaine Plank, and Loretta Williams. It was reported that Sidney Sandridge had been scheduled to return home from rehab this week, but I didn't get confirmation on that.

President Tom Casteel called the meeting to order. He reminded the members that our Club is accumulating school supplies for Morris Elementary School. A large box was overflowing with supplies brought to the meeting by some of the members. Tom said he would gladly accept money donations from those who would rather do that than buy school supplies. He will continue to accept supplies and donations for Morris Elementary School for two more weeks.

After introduction of our guests, he presented to Al Renz a framed cross-stitch of the state of Alabama which he had done himself. Tom related how he had learned that Al & Marlene had received a cross stitch of every state they had resided in (at length), and this one was given in recognition of all the work that Al does for our Club.

## New Member Installation

Tom asked new members Bill Peters and Milton Williams to come forward along with Al Renz and Jim Rowe. President Tom administered the oath of membership to Bill and Milton, and Optimist pins were affixed to them by Jim Rowe and Al Renz respectively.

## Program

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Duane Plank came to the podium to introduce our program for today. First, however, he informed attendees that at our next meeting at the DTH on July 26<sup>th</sup>, Dr. David Copeland, Superintendent of Madison County Schools would be our speaker. Dr. Copeland, a former Optimist in Missouri, will speak on the vision he has for Madison County Schools and the accomplishments of the school system this past year.

Duane introduced our speaker, Dale Bowen. Dale is the son-in-law of member Jim Berry, and has spoken to the club once before. Dale has been with the Lincoln Village Preservation Corporation for 8 years, and is now the Assistant Director of that organization. The organization has received national recognition for their work in the Lincoln Mills area a few years ago.

Dale began his talk by recounting the history of Lincoln Village Ministries which began in 2002. About 15 churches are represented in the organization. Since its inception, they have purchased some 30 properties and renovated 20 houses so that residents in this area could have safe, clean and affordable housing. To view a video on this part of their ministry, visit their web site: [www.lincolnvillageministry.com](http://www.lincolnvillageministry.com).

The ministry also provided tutoring and technology to Lincoln Elementary School until the school was closed and students were transferred to Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School. Through their efforts, and those of others, students at Lincoln Elementary School raised their academic standing from the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile. About 2 years ago, the ministry purchased a double-wide trailer, and Lincoln Academy was begun for 16 students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grades. Most of these students flourished in this new environment far beyond what they would have done in public schools.

This past year the ministry was given the opportunity to purchase Lincoln School on Meridian Street, a historic school building in the city. Throughout this spring and summer, volunteer work teams have been patching, painting and generally renovating the property which has lain idle for about 3 years. On August 20<sup>th</sup> the new Lincoln Academy will open with about 60 students in 1<sup>st</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> grades.

Students are chosen based primarily on prior relationships; i.e., those who living in the renovated houses, and siblings of last year's students in the Academy. The academy is not free. Students will pay tuition, but because of private donations, tuitions will be a small fraction of the actual cost to run the school. Specific details on tuitions are still being worked out.

### **Closing**

George McDonough won the attendance prize at the first drawing. Carl Winkler led the recitation of the Optimist Creed to close our meeting.

**Don't Forget: WE NEED MORE MEMBERS! Invite someone to our July 26<sup>th</sup> meeting.**

*Clyde Merins*

### **Optimistic Quote of the Week**

**Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,  
nothing is going to get better. It's not.**

*~Dr. Seuss*

### **CALENDAR**

- |      |                   |  |
|------|-------------------|--|
| 7/19 | Thursday 11:45 am | Optimist Recreation Center<br><b>Business Meeting - Food – (Alberto Duarte)</b>                |
| 7/26 | Thursday 11:45 am | Downtown Holiday Inn<br><b>Dr. David Copeland<br/>Superintendent of Madison County Schools</b> |
| 8/2  | Thursday 11:45 am | Downtown Holiday Inn<br><b>TBD - Fabiani Duarte</b>  |
| 8/7  | Tuesday 4:00 pm   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Commercial Bank<br><b>Board Meeting</b>  |