



**OPTIMIST
INTERNATIONAL**

Friend of Youth

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Club meets

**1st, 2nd, & 4th Thursdays
At 11:45 am
Mullins Restaurant
Huntsville, AL**

**Our business meeting
is held on the 3rd
Thursday of the
month at the Optimist
Recreation Center on
Oakwood Ave**

Opti - Topics

Opening

The Optimist Club of Huntsville held its regularly scheduled meeting at Mullins Restaurant. Today's meeting was devoted to remembering Zack Thompson, especially for his many years of service to our Optimist Club and to Optimist International. We had our largest attendance in recent memory with 21 Optimists and 9 guests in attendance.

Our guests today were: Betty Thompson, Zack's wife; Patricia "Trish" Sommers (Zack's older daughter), her husband Mark and children Marshall, Sydney and Matt; Brenda Pearce (Zack's younger daughter) and her son Carson; and Ms. Elizabeth Whitten.

President George McDonough asked Rev. Jim Berry to open the meeting in prayer, and Al Renz to lead the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Optimist Family News

Tom Casteel will be having knee replacement surgery (again) next Tuesday. This time it will be on his left knee. Tom says his repaired right knee is doing well, and he has been able to climb stairs with it doing the main effort. He will be in the hospital until July 5 then in rehab for three to four weeks.

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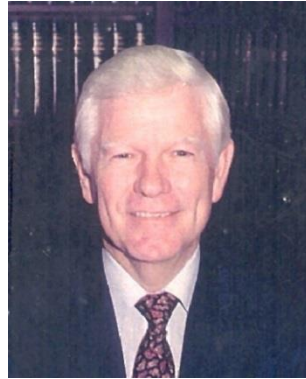
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Program



President George asked Zack's wife, Betty, to introduce the family members that were our guests, today (see photo section). In introducing her daughters, Betty said she wouldn't say how old they were, but Brenda was 6 months old, and Trish was 3 years old when Zack joined our Optimist Club. For the grandchildren, she related that Sydney will be getting her driver's license on Monday, Carson will be getting his driver's license in September, Matt is a sophomore in Mech. Engr. at Auburn, and Marshall is finishing his MBA at UAHuntsville.

Tom Casteel began the tribute to Zack by recounting his years of service with Optimism. Zack was president of our Club in 1977/1978, Lt. Governor in 1980/1981, District Governor in 1985/1986 (one of 3 from our Club), and International Vice President in 1990-1991 (the only one from our Club). He next told some anecdotes from Zack's service to Optimism. Zack designed the first lapel pin for the then Al/MS District, and he was a strong proponent of reviving members' interest in collecting pins from other Optimist Clubs.

Some years ago, Zack (and Betty) were the high bidders for a door prize at a District Meeting—an axe. They bid \$41, the proceeds to go to further Optimist causes. At a later District Meeting they donated this axe for a new door prize, and this time it brought \$82 (again by Betty). At a third District Meeting the axe brought in \$780, and at a fourth \$2,487. Tom said it is rumored that the axe is now at Zack's farm, good as new since no one knows how to use it.

Tom told how Zack especially loved the Optimist International Foundation (not to be confused with our own foundation). The OI Foundation funds the scholarships in

the OI districts for the winners of the Oratorical Contest and the Essay Contest, among other grants. Zack was typically among the top donors in the district to the OI Foundation.

Betty Thompson spoke next, and she began by saying Tom had stolen some of her material. She then had grandson Matt come up to model one (of 3) of Zack's Optimist vests, this one profusely covered with Optimist pins. She then elaborated on how Zack saw the need for an AL/MS District pin, and undertook its design. She passed around one of the pins for us to see. When Zack was Intl. VP, they traveled to every place where an Optimist Club meeting was held. Their family vacations were typically to go to an Optimist function. Zack was nominated for International President of OI, and failed to win the election by only 1 vote. Betty said she was very thankful for the loss, because the President's position requires travel for OI 50 weeks out of the year.

Betty closed by relating how far-reaching Optimism is. She said the Optimist Creed had touched many people, including some at Zack's funeral who saw (and heard) the Creed for the first time. The Creed was printed in the funeral program, and Betty brought copies of the funeral program for anyone who didn't make the funeral. She also related about how Zack had combined two of his other loves, the University of Tennessee and the Gideon Society, by having a Gideon New Testament printed with an orange cover. These, too, were available at Zack's funeral, and Betty brought others to our meeting for anyone who wanted one.

President George asked any Club member to relate a memory of Zack.

Jim Berry started the ball rolling by remembering how both he and Zack somehow got suckered into donating \$1,000 to the Huntsville Optimist Foundation. He claimed to not remember who challenged who, or why, at a Club business meeting, but that he had missed a lot of recreational outings due to shelling out the money.

Jim Berry introduced Elizabeth Whitten, a long-time member at the First Baptist Church, and now participating in the Center for Aging's Balance Group there. Ms. Whitten told how she had first met Zack and Betty on Senior Adult's bus trip many years ago. Zack was instrumental in getting the First Baptist Church to provide, at no cost, space for regular weekly meetings of the 8 balance classes.

George McDonough recalled how he, Zack and Jim Berry had lunch together one time, and Zack and Jim debated theology for 20 minutes. He said a local politician remarked to him as they left the restaurant that Zack and Jim had made enjoyable lunchtime entertainment.

Clyde Nevins related how Zack had once told him about geodes laying around on some property he owned on the banks of the Elk River. Clyde was a little skeptical, and asked if he could go and pick up a few. Zack okayed the search, and Clyde showed one he found to verify the assertion.

Bill Clarke told of how Zack seemed to always have the best information when the Marshall Space Flight Center was to be reorganized. People from all over the Center came to Zack's office to look at his bulletin board and see what his network of informants had disclosed about the new organization chart.

Carl Winkler related how Zack came to be President of our Club some 40 years ago. At the time Zack was tentatively slated to be nominated to the TVA Board of Directors and was reluctant to take on the Club Presidency as well. Carl and George Ferrell convinced him to accept the Presidency if the TVA position fell through (which it did).

Jesse Lang told about how he questioned Zack's strong advocacy of the 2nd Amendment and the ownership of guns (Jesse is a retired Detroit police officer). Zack told Jesse that the world, even including Alabama, was a dangerous place, and he frequently asked Jesse "Do you have your gun with you?"

Ralph Caneer related how Zack had pushed him when he was president of our Club. At a lunch meeting with an Optimist from Vicksburg, MS, and a local man, Zack demonstrated to Ralph "how he operated." He had the local man signed up as an Optimist by the time lunch was over.

Alberto Duarte told about how gracious Zack was to him when he was Club president. Zack volunteered to drive him (and Betty) to Tupelo, MS, to a District Meeting. On the way there he acted as tour guide as well as chauffeur. He also was thankful for Zack's friendship with Fabiani.

Gay Pepper said the Optimists included women as well as men. In Zack's spirit, she said she would be glad to sponsor Betty, Brenda and Trish to be members in our Club.

Closing

President George McDonough thanked Betty and her extended family for being with us to remember Zack. He gave her our traditional speaker's gift of an Optimist Creed printed on a tile, and asked her to draw for our attendance prize. Jesse Lang won the pot on the first drawing.

Dr. Carl Winkler closed the meeting by leading us in the reciting the Optimist Creed.

Clyde Nevins

Optimistic Quote of the Week

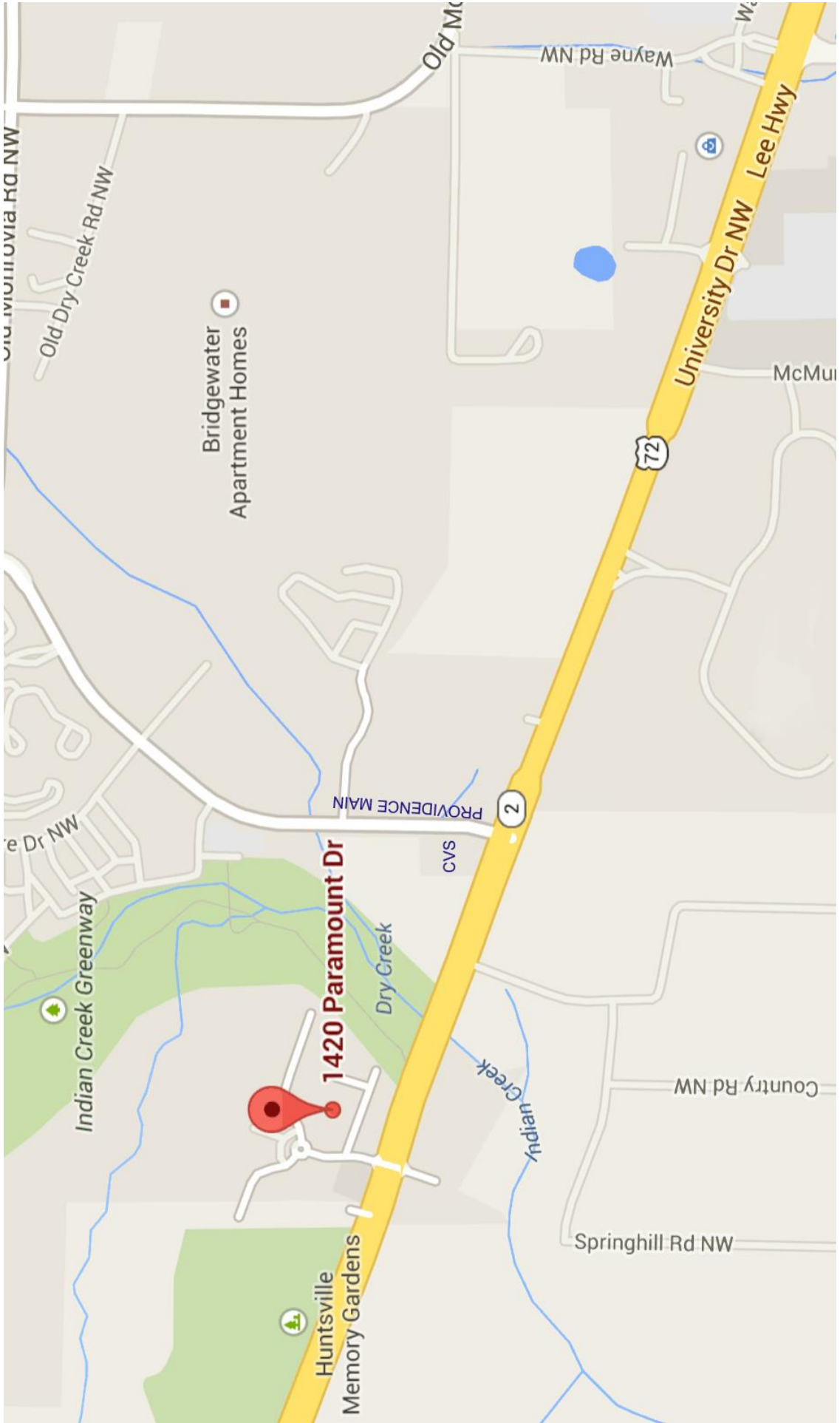
I look back on my life like a good day's work, it was done and I am satisfied with it.

~Grandma Moses



CALENDAR

- 7/3 **NO MEETING**
Independence Day
- 7/8 Tuesday 4:00 pm 1st Commercial Bank
Board Meeting
- 7/10 Thursday 11:45 am Terranova's, 1420 Paramount Dr #1.
See Map Next Page
TBD – Gay Pepper
- 7/17 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center
Business Meeting - Food – (Jim Berry)
- 7/24 Thursday 11:45 am Mullins Restaurant
TBD– Gay Pepper
- 7/31 **NO MEETING**
5th Thursday
- 8/7 **NO MEETING**
Replaced by Picnic on Saturday
- 8/9 Saturday Time TBD Ford's Chapel UMC's Pavilion
Annual Picnic
- 8/14 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center
Business Meeting - Food – (Duane Plank)
- 8/21 Thursday 11:45 am Mullins Restaurant
TBD– Duane Plank





Matt Sommers, Brenda Pearce (standing) and Trish Sommers



Marshall & Sydney Sommers



Carson Pearce



Alberto Duarte with guests Betty Thompson and Elizabeth Whitten



Matt Sommers



Matt Sommers with one of Zack's Optimist vests

THE OPTIMIST CREED

Promise Yourself -

To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.

To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.

To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.

To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true

To think only of the best, to work only for the best and to expect only the best.

To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.

To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.

To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

Optimist International



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TO: