



**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 met at Beuaregard's Restaurant, today, with fifteen Optimists, our speaker and one guest in attendance. Our guest was Angela Inman (John's wife). It was good to see Kathy Anderson with us today.

President George McDonough rang the bell and asked Clyde Nevins to open the meeting in prayer. Duane Plank led the Club in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Lunches were being served a good bit late, so President George modified the agenda to have our speaker speak before he was fed.

Beauregard's Restaurant Review

- The room was not able to be closed off for our meeting, so some patrons of the restaurant were seated in the same room, but they didn't seem to mind.
- The acoustics were not good in the room. Thankfully, Bob Martin had brought the Club's PA system, so the speaker could be heard (by us and the regular patrons).
- All the lunches were ordered off the menu, and they were cooked to order. Some lunches were quite late in arriving; some as late as 12:20. I got mine just as the speaker began his talk, so I had to take notes while eating.
- The food quality, insofar as I could tell, was good, but the menu was limited to sandwiches, chicken wings and ribs prepared in a variety of ways and with a small choice of sides.
- All in all, I missed Mullins.

Optimist Family News

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Past President **Tom Casteel** is nearly recovered from his second knee replacement surgery. Tom said the recovery from this latest surgery was faster and less painful than his first. His last therapy session was scheduled after our meeting.

I received a call from **Elaine Plank** earlier this week. Elaine is helping to find after-school help for a student in her Special Needs Sunday School class. I agreed to announce this need to our Club. Nathan, the student in question, is 18 years old and has Down's Syndrome. He attends Grissom High School, and needs a way to get home after school (about 3:15 p.m.) and to be looked after until his father gets off work (at 5:30 p.m.). This would likely require someone living in the Jones Valley area. It would not have to be the same person for every day. Please call Elaine if you are led to help, or if you need more information.

Announcements



President George McDonough announced that the Club is still gathering **school supplies** for needy school children. Bring them to the Business Meeting at the ORC next week if you haven't already contributed to this worthy project.

Program

President George McDonough asked Duane Plank to introduce our speaker for today, Dr. David Copeland. Dr. Copeland is a native Alabaman who was hired as Superintendent of Schools for Madison County about 2 ½ years ago. He was defeated for another term in a recent election, so his term will expire on Dec. 31 of this year.

Dr. Copeland thanked the Club for inviting him to speak again, his 3rd visit with us. He said his talk would be brief, and he wanted to tell us what had been accomplished on his watch as Superintendent. He divided these accomplishments into those that were professional and those that were personal.

First, the professional. He said he was 1,000% pleased with the accomplishments made in the County schools while he was Superintendent. A few statistics:

- The graduation rate of County students increased 10 %
- The drop-out rate of students decreased from 10% to 4 %
- He upgraded and expanded the Career Technology programs at the high schools.
- He partnered with Adtran to install a state-of-the-art telephone system. The County paid only \$300,000 for a \$1.3 million system.
- He improved the safety of the schools through ID tags and entry controls in light of the recent school shootings.
- He replaced inefficient lighting and HVAC systems in some schools which will result in \$20 million saving in energy bills over the next few years.
- ACT test scores increased, and students received \$30 million in scholarships.

On the personal side, he said he was happy to report that his wife is now recovered from a severe lung disease. Eighteen months ago, she was given only 18 months to live. Now her tests are negative.

He said it was a thrill for him to rub elbows with the Governor, and eat next to Astronauts at some banquets.

He said he enjoyed learning about the military since he had never been in the military himself.

In answer to a question on his views of Common Core, Dr. Copeland said commenting on it was like walking through a mine field because of the passionate opinions of it, both for and against. However, he said increasing the scholastic standards in some Alabama schools is sorely needed, and Common Core will help that. Also, he said that Common Core would make it easier for military families' children to adapt to new schools after a move. Nevertheless, he is definitely for Home Rule on schools, and would not like the Federal Government to be in control of local curricula.

In answer to a second question, he said that the Madison County School System operates on a far lower cost per pupil than either the Huntsville City Schools or the Madison City Schools. Off the top of his head, he said the numbers were something like \$4,600 per pupil for Huntsville, \$4,000 per pupil for Madison, and \$2,200 per pupil for the County.

A third question asked if there were plans to go to Tablet computers in the County schools. He responded that the system has installed WiFi all school buildings, and that one-two-one access is provided. Students are encouraged to BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) to school.

A fourth questioner asked what skills were being taught in the County's Career Tech programs. Already started are programs in Mechanics, Engineering and Structures. EMT (Medical Techs) and Culinary Arts (upgraded Home Ec.) are to be added soon.

A final question had to do with what his plans were after Dec. 31 when his term expires. He said he has looked at several opportunities across the country, but would like to stay in Alabama. Nothing is firm as yet.

In closing, Dr. Copeland said he is certain the God has a plan for his life, and that he is open to what God's will is for him in the future.

Closing

President George McDonough thanked Dr. Copeland for speaking to us, and gave him our traditional speaker's gift of an Optimist Creed printed on a tile. Dr. Copeland also drew the name for today's door prize. The first name drawn was Vastell Williams, and he was present.

Dr. Carl Winkler led us in the reciting the Optimist Creed to close the meeting.

Clyde Nevins

Optimistic Quote of the Week

“Keep your face always toward the sunshine - and shadows will fall behind you.”

~Walt Whitman

Calendar

8/21 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center

Business Meeting - Food – (Duane Plank)

8/28 Thursday 11:45 am Mullins Restaurant

Blake Dorning – Madison County Sherriff

9/2 Tuesday 4:00 pm 1st Commercial Bank

Board Meeting

9/4 Thursday 11:45 am Mullins Restaurant

TBD – Bill Peters

9/11 Thursday 11:45 am Mullins Restaurant

TBD – Bill Peters

9/18 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center

Business Meeting - Food – (Bill Peters)

9/25 Thursday 6:30 pm TBD

Officer Installation Banquet

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: