



**OPTIMIST  
INTERNATIONAL**

*Friend of Youth*

**PRESIDENT**

George McDonough  
256-534-2591  
gfmcdonough@yahoo.com

**1<sup>st</sup> VICE PRESIDENT**

Alfred G. Adams  
502-541-6469  
alfredg.adams@gmail.com

**2<sup>nd</sup> VICE PRESIDENT**

John Inman  
256-425-8022  
inman\_john@hotmail.com

**SECRETARY TREASURER**

Al Renz  
256-772-7929  
optimist3480@aol.com

**Club meets**

**1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays  
At 11:45 am**

**Mullins Restaurant  
Huntsville, AL**

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

# Opti - Topics

## Opening

The Optimist Club of Huntsville assembled for a regular meeting at Mullins Restaurant, today. Seventeen Optimists, our speaker and two guests were in attendance. Our guests were Bick Whitener, Sidney Sandridge's son-in-law, and Chief Deputy David Jernigan. It was good to be back in familiar surroundings with plenty of options for lunch.

President George McDonough rang the bell and asked Rev. Jim Berry to open the meeting in prayer. Tom Casteel led the Club in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Our speaker had another speaking engagement at 1:00 p.m., so the program started a little early and finished early. That worked well and could be something to consider as a regular procedure for future meetings.

## Announcements

President George reported that there are still some openings for the monthly program and business meeting lunch responsibility. A list was reportedly passed around at the meeting, but didn't reach me. Please call George and help him fill in the remaining slots.

Al Renz reported he has a few Optimist polo shirts for sale. He has the following sizes available:

3 Mediums

2 Large

## **DIRECTORS**

Vastell Williams  
256-886-1344

[VHV.Williams@yahoo.com](mailto:VHV.Williams@yahoo.com)

Bob Martin  
bmartin12@bellsouth.net  
256-722-8062

Matt Hancock  
256-990-0077  
[wmhancock@wolfejones.com](mailto:wmhancock@wolfejones.com)

Gay Pepper  
256-288-4321  
[gaypepper@fcb-hsv.com](mailto:gaypepper@fcb-hsv.com)

Jim Roe  
256-883-8950  
[j\\_m\\_roe@yahoo.com](mailto:j_m_roe@yahoo.com)

## **PAST PRESIDENT**

Tom Casteel  
256-882-9380  
[tom@leetsac.net](mailto:tom@leetsac.net)

## **NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

Clyde Nevins  
256-881-8215  
[clyde.nevins@Juno.com](mailto:clyde.nevins@Juno.com)

Mailing Address:  
Huntsville Optimist Club  
P.O. Box 2230  
Huntsville, AL 35804

## **Program**



President George McDonough asked Duane Plank to introduce our speaker for today, Sheriff Blake Dorning. He also introduced Chief Deputy David Jernigan, who accompanied the Sheriff. Sheriff Dorning is a native of Madison County, attended Grissom High School, and began his career in the Madison County Sheriff's department in 1983 as a Corrections Deputy in the County Jail. He was elected Sheriff in 2002. His resume lists 23 training courses he has taken to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the department.

Sheriff Dorning began by saying it was an honor to be Sheriff in our county. He said Duane had suggested he talk about how the Madison County Sheriff's Department had come to be recognized as one of the best in the entire country. He said it has been a challenge to maintain an effective force since the number of deputies, 114, has not increased in the last 20 years if school resource officers are not counted. Also, Madison County Deputies are paid the lowest salary of any department north of Birmingham, and only a few rural counties south of Birmingham have lower salaries.

Of the 114, twenty-three deputies form the Criminal Investigation unit and do not go on patrol. Another few only serve civil papers. The key to maintaining an effective and efficient law enforcement presence in the county is technology. The sheriff listed some of the technologies being used by the department:

- The department is totally paperless, except for what is needed by the court system. Deputies have a computer in their patrol cars that can retrieve information by a simple swipe and printout an "e-citation."

- The department makes use of a “ground penetrating radar” unit to locate old, unmarked graveyards and to locate stashes of drug money. It was recently used to clear a building site for the Space and Rocket Center.
- Crime Scene Units have a tablet that can make 3-D scans of a crime scene which can be entered into an e-file for use in building a case.
- The Sheriff’s Department has a radio system that allows direct communication with local ambulances, fire departments, Huntsville City Police, Madison City Police and State Troopers in this area.
- The Department recently purchased body cameras for all deputies on patrol. These will replace the car-mounted video system and should be better (but by no means perfect) in providing video evidence during traffic stops and other apprehensions.
- As is the case with all high-technology items, they become obsolete in five years. New software is periodically required to upgrade the units, and training for the update must also be done prior to the upgrade.

Sheriff Dorning said providing quality training is a key factor in improving efficiency and retaining deputies. The department has opened its own training center, and brings in trainers rather than sending deputies to another city or state for needed training.

The Sheriff stated there is no competition among the various law-enforcement agencies in our area. City, county and state officers are not territorial; they all agree that catching the bad guy is what matters, not who does the catching.

### **Questions for our speaker**

Jesse Lang asked the Sheriff’s opinion on the reported shooting by a 9-year old girl being instructed in firing an Uzi. The Sheriff said, he wouldn’t necessarily rely on reports of what happened since the news media and social networks often have their own agendas, but common sense should prevail in who is capable of learning to shoot any firearm. He, himself, had learned to shoot at about nine. He said he could easily fill an auditorium if he could teach common sense. Chief Deputy Jernigan, a former FBI agent, agreed, saying setting an arbitrary minimum age to learn to shoot would not be a good idea.

Jesse also asked the Sheriff’s opinion on whether local law enforcement units should make use of surplus military equipment in quelling riots, etc. The Sheriff replied that “Right now, somewhere in the country a police officer is being shot at.” Effective means to counteract that might effectively utilize some such units, but he doesn’t know of any being used in the State of Alabama, including his department.

Alberto asked if there were any new plans for the department to be put in place following his re-election. He replied that there were none of significance. He said that the low turnover rate in Sheriff's Deputies in his department is due to motivation by training in proficiency, going to 10-hour patrol shifts, and making use of computer technology to reduce paperwork.

Gay Pepper asked why Madison County is one of the top three counties in Alabama in sending inmates to State prisons. The answer: The use of technology enables the Sheriff's Department to catch criminal that might otherwise elude identification and capture.

## **Closing**

President George McDonough thanked Sheriff Dorning for speaking to us. He said it needs to be said that this is a great community, and the fact that we can feel safe in our homes and schools is largely due to the fine law enforcement that his department and others provide.

George gave the Sheriff our traditional speaker's gift of an Optimist Creed printed on a tile, and said he should have quite a collection of them by now. The Sheriff said yes, he had 4 or 5, but he keeps all of them and similar items on display in his office for visitors to see. They show the appreciation of what his department is doing.

The Sheriff willingly complied with a request to draw a name for our attendance prize. Al Adams was the first name drawn, and Al was in attendance.

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

*Clyde Nevins*

## **Optimistic Quote of the Week**

**When I despair...I remember that all through history, the way of truth and love has always won. There have been murderers and tyrants, and for a time they can seem invincible. But in the end they always fall. Think of it ... always.**

*~Mahatma Gandhi*

# Calendar

- 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**     Optimist Recreation Center  
**Officer Installation Banquet**

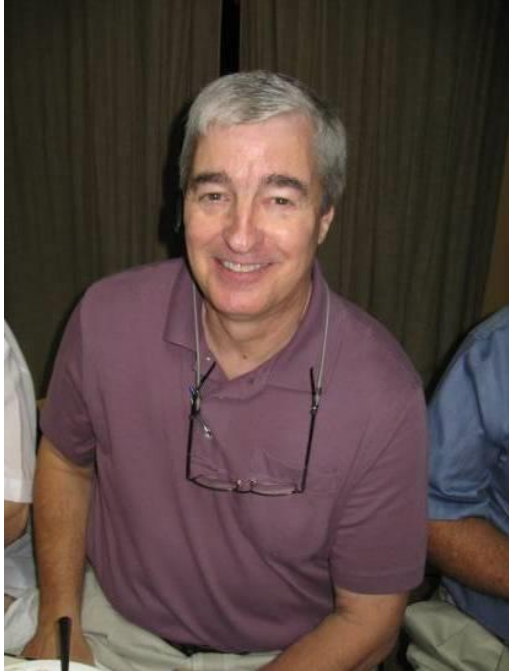
## - PHOTOS -



**Sheriff Blake Dorning**



**Deputy David Jernigan**



**Bick Whitener**

**Sidney Sandridge's son-in-law**



**Gay Pepper**



**President George McDonough**



**Tom Casteel**

## THE OPTIMIST CREED

Promise Yourself -

**T**o be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.

**T**o talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.

**T**o make all your friends feel that there is something in them.

**T**o look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true

**T**o think only of the best, to work only for the best and to expect only the best.

**T**o be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

**T**o forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.

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

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

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

Optimist International



**Huntsville Optimist Club**  
710 Versailles Drive  
Huntsville, AL 35803-1728



**TO:**