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Club meets

1st, 2nd, & 4th Thursdays

At 11:45 am

Check Website for

location

hsvoptimists.org

Opti - Topics

Today's Restaurant

The Optimist Club of Huntsville held a trial meeting at Oh Bryan's Restaurant on Hwy 72 East today. As Gay had told us, it was "a ways out," but not too bad. I clocked the distance from the Oakwood Ave. & Andrew Jackson intersection to be 3.3 miles, and I found the drive less stressful and actually quicker than tackling the University Drive, noon-time traffic. Parking at the restaurant was ample and convenient. The restaurant was soon full of non-Optimist patrons, and is evidently a popular eating spot in that part of the county.

We met in a private meeting room that provided enough seating, but was cramped for moving about. Acoustics were not good, with overhead speaker music and noise from the adjacent kitchen being a problem.

Each Club member had a selection of three entrées: a petite sirloin steak, fried catfish or a baked chicken breast. With the entrée, we had a choice of sides plus a one-time trip to the salad bar. I heard several compliments on the quality of the food, and we received good service from our waitress, Kristin.

Opening

There were 17 Optimists in attendance today—many arriving early due to not knowing the transit times to the restaurant. We also had one guest, Pat Lang, Jesse's wife.

President Al Adams asked Alberto Duarte to open the meeting in prayer. We skipped the Pledge of Allegiance today—because of no flag again, I guess.

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

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Optimist Family News

President Al Adams reported that **Rev. Jim Berry** will be taking a 4-month “sabbatical” from the Club. Jim is having lot of pain in his right leg and hip. He anticipates having to undergo surgery, and the time off is judged to be necessary for the post-surgery rehab before he can attend meetings.

Secretary Al Renz announced that he had received an e-mail from **Bill Peters** resigning from the Club. Bill’s message gave no reason.

Announcements



Gay Pepper, Chairperson of the **Youth Appreciation Banquet**, asked for the Club to solicit any groups or organizations they are associated with for nominations to be honored at the banquet. She said this is traditionally the hardest part of the job in putting on the banquet. The date of the banquet has not been set as yet, but will be announced soon in the Opti-Topics.



Tom Casteel reported that the **Respect for Law** banquet will be held on Monday, May 4. Club members who plan to attend will need to sign up on a sheet at either of the next two Club meetings.



Tom Casteel announced that the **Band Committee** will have a meeting this coming Saturday morning at 9:00 a. m. at our band instrument storage unit on University Drive. Tom will send out an e-mail notice to the members to remind them. Tom also reported that the Club had been donated a \$1,000 trumpet as a result of the LINK program being mentioned on the *Brass, Reeds and Percussion* program on WLRH.

Program

April Program Chairman Alberto Duarte reminded us that this month he will have three Optimists speak on their life experiences. His intent is for us to get to know our fellow Optimists better. For today, he introduced Rev. Jim Berry, an Optimist who has been very supportive of our Optimist projects and an active recruiter of new members.

Jim said his little talk today should be titled “Pot Holes and Stepping Stones.” He said he had been an optimist (little “o”) all his life, and has learned that often what appear to be pot holes are in reality stepping stones.

Jim’s talk today covered only his life from birth to the time he arrived in Huntsville so he could finish in the allotted time.

He was born on July 11, 1930, and was the third of five children. When he was very young, he said he had difficulty pronouncing the word “middle,” and it came out sounding like “mental.” To this day, his siblings refer to him at times as the “mental child” in the family. As a boy he was very active in the Boy Scout program and achieved the Life Scout rank, just one rank below Eagle Scout. He was disappointed that his Scoutmaster left his troop which prevented him from getting his Eagle.

Jim played football in high school for 2 years. His parents also asked him to try out for the high school band using the clarinet once played by his sister, Dottie Rose. After a few lessons, his music teacher suggested he try out for flag carrier instead, which he did, and carried the American Flag during the band’s marches.

Jim took a letter from his minister and a transcript of his grades to Snead College (a two-year college) to see if he could get in there on a scholarship. He said Dr. Cook admitted him only by the minister’s letter and not his grades. He earned room, board and tuition by washing dishes in the college kitchen. He washed dishes six days a week, and on Monday nights went to Naval Reserve meetings.

He had some interesting experiences in the Naval Reserve, and took two ocean cruises. The most eventful one was his first, a cruise to Santiago, Cuba on a Destroyer/Minesweeper. On this cruise he worked in the ship’s galley (using his dishwashing experience?). Due to on-board friction between two of the ship’s officers, he was put “on report” and ordered to attend the Captain’s Mass. There he was found guilty of disobeying an officer and was sentenced to four days in a makeshift brig—a 4 ft. by 4 ft. coat room with only bread and water to eat. Fortunately his friends slipped him canned peaches and other food while there.

Later, the Admiral expunged his “record,” as he knew of the friction on board his ship.

He left the Naval Reserve at the time he finished at Snead College. He next enrolled at Emory Henry College in Virginia where he played football. He received a hard block on his left knee there which ended his football career.

Through a former pastor and friend, he was led to go to Birmingham Southern College. He paid his tuition there by being Youth Director at a Methodist church. While preparing a Christmas program, he met a young lady who was to play the piano in the program, and six months later, Nell and Jim were engaged.

Jim was pastor at the United Methodist Church in Palmerdale, Alabama, during the turbulent racial conflicts of the 1960s. He said there was a strong influence of KKK and John Birchers in the church’s membership, and this resulted in the church voting to switch Sunday school curriculum from the prescribed UMC material, which featured Black people as well as Whites. When the congregation defied both him and the UMC Bishop on this matter, Jim was reassigned to the position of Associate Minister at the First United Methodist Church in Huntsville in 1965.

Not long after arriving in Huntsville, Jim met Bob Lind. Bob had the (only) McDonalds franchise (on South Parkway) and was a member of the Optimist Club of Huntsville. Bob successfully recruited Jim, and soon he was working the Optimist concession stand at the Madison County Coliseum (where Sam’s Club is now located).

Jim closed his talk by saying, “I thank God for you all.” He said he considers God and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to be the greatest optimist of all. He recalled the parable of the sower from the Gospel of Matthew, wherein the sower (Christ) was truly optimistic about some of the seed being sown falling on “good soil.”

Closing

President Al Adams gave our speaker an Easter basket filled with goodies (supplied by Buddy Beck) in lieu of a tile with the Optimist creed. Richie Myers won the attendance prize on the first drawing (again!?).

Dr. Carl Winkler led us in the reciting the Optimist Creed.

Clyde Nevins

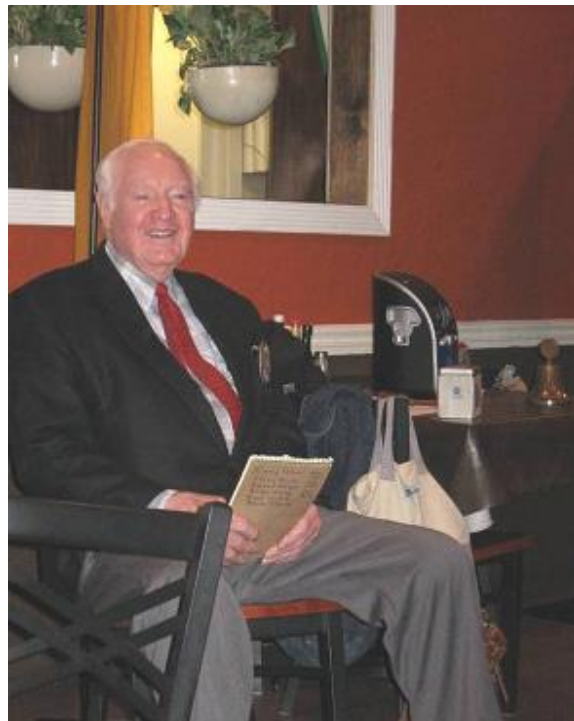
Optimistic Quote of the Week

“Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”

~Francis of Assisi



Jesse and (guest) Pat Lang



Our Speaker, Rev. Jim Berry

CALENDAR

- 4/16 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center
Business Meeting - Food - (Alberto Duarte)
- 4/23 Thursday 11:45 am Location **TBD**
Tiffany Martin - Director - Hawthorne Conservatory
- 4/30 Thursday 11:45 am **NO MEETING**
5th Thursday
- 5/4 Monday 6:30 pm Respect for Law Banquet
Mayfair Church of Christ (Gymnasium)
- 5/5 Tuesday 4:00 pm 1st Commercial Bank - Whitesburg Dr.
Board Meeting
- 5/7 Thursday **NO MEETING**
Respect for Law Banquet replaces this meeting
- 5/14 Thursday 11:45 am Location **TBD**
Bill Kling, Jr., Councilman
- 5/21 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center
Business Meeting - Food - (Al Renz)
- 5/28 Thursday 11:45 am Location **TBD**
Debi Trumbull, TARCOG
(Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments)

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:

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HERE