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Club meets

1st Thursday

At 6:00 pm

2nd, & 4th Thursdays

At 11:45 am

88 Buffet

Opti - Topics

Today's Meeting at 88 Buffet Restaurant

There were 14 Club members in attendance and two guests. Our guests were Jack Freedman, guest of George McDonough, and Pat Lang, wife and guest of Jesse. As usual, we all overate, and the service was very good.

Opening

President Al Adams asked Rev. Jim Berry to bring the opening prayer. We had our small flag again today, so we were able to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to it.

Announcements



President Al Adams needs volunteers to man our booth at the Huntsville City Schools' **iRegister 2016 Fair**. The event will be take place this Saturday from 10:00 a. m until 2:00 p. m. **Al has sent an e-mail for volunteers to man our booth.** Please respond to him if you can help, especially to help set up our booth beginning at 9:00 a. m. We will be promoting our Oratorical Contest and JOOI Clubs especially at the fair.

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

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR

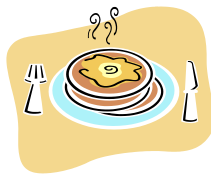
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President Al Adams announced that our Club will participate in the **Community Kite Festival** again this year. We will man a table stocked with balsa wood gliders and plenty of information about becoming an Optimist. The festival will be from 11:00 a. m. to 3:00 p. m. on **Saturday, March 5**. There will be time for you to attend the Club's Oratorical Contest that morning and still help man our booth. **Contact Tom Casteel to volunteer.**



Alberto Duarte asked everyone who has either money from our **Pancake Breakfast** ticket sales or for a donation to the Hawthorne Conservatory to **get the money to Al Renz ASAP**. Alberto has invited Ms. Tiffany Martin and her husband to next week's meeting to present them a check for the proceeds of the pancake breakfast.



President Al Adams reported that the Club awarded our second Star 99.1/CAFY Young Citizen of the Month Award at this month's City Council meeting. Our Club's logo is now on the flyer and brochure for this program.



Treasurer Al Renz reported an update on the revenue from our Fall Fund Raiser. Project Chairman George McDonough has been able to close out all the outstanding pecan money, and the new total is \$1,211.

Program #1

(For some reason we seemed to have scheduled two programs for today's meeting)



Gay Pepper introduced our first speaker for today, Ms. Karen Mockensturm, Executive Director of **Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theater and Academy**. Ms. Mockensturm began by giving a brief bio of how she came to be associated with Fantasy Playhouse, and then a short history of Fantasy Playhouse from its beginning in 1961.

Fantasy Playhouse has three major branches: Production, The Fantasy Academy, and the Fantasy Players. The productions play 10 performances each with two matinees, and over 10,000 people attend their productions annually. Currently, there is a Fantasy Playhouse production of Winnie the Pooh in the Von Braun Center Playhouse, ending this weekend. Each production requires from 40 to 100 volunteers.

One of the needs learned early on by Fantasy was to provide a "feeder program" that trains kids who will enter our high schools where there are very good theater programs. The Fantasy Academy of Theater offers over 100 classes, reaching 700 students per year. These classes are held during spring and fall breaks and at a summer camp at a nominal cost of \$10 per class.

Fantasy has afterschool programs in 19 schools in Huntsville and Madison County. Fantasy also reaches out to socio/economically deprived communities with free classes. There is a special year-long program at Ridgecrest school this year. Kids are taught acting, dancing, stage music and stage craft (sets, lighting, etc.).

Ms. Mockensturm ended her talk by stating the benefits of being in a theater arts program;

- Kids get a sense of self confidence
- Kids learn to collaborate on a common effort
- Kids learn lasting skills such as speaking in public
- Kids learn of career opportunities in acting and stagecraft

In addition, Ms. Mockensturm reported that kids who are in a theater arts program are (1) more likely to vote, (2) more likely to be in a science fair, and (3) less likely to drop out of school.

On the last point, statistics show that the school drop-out rate for kids in a theater arts program is only 4 % compared to 22% for the general student body.

Program # 2.

President Al Adams introduced Mr. Geoff Otieno, Director of Child Care Services at Harris Home for Children. Mr. Otieno began his talk by giving a brief history of the Harris Home for Children. It was begun by Ms. Chessie Harris in 1954 to provide residential foster care, therapeutic care and educational services for kids from an abusive or neglected home situation. It was licensed by the State in 1960, and became a United Way partner in 1961.



The Harris Home provides care for a maximum of 30 kids, both boys and girls, beginning at age 12 and ending at age 21. Kids from all over Alabama, and occasionally from other states live at the home. The Home also has four apartments where “graduates” from the home may opt to live.

One of the main objectives of the home is to provide everything that a good home should provide. Kids at Harris Home learn basic living skills to start. Many do not know how to make a bed or wash dishes. As they continue in the program they learn to be accountable for their actions, to learn that bad decisions bring consequences, to develop discipline in their daily living, and to learn the value of education as they become adults.

The goal of the Harris Home is always to return kids to their own homes, when that is possible. Often, unfortunately, kids will stay at the home until they reach the age of 21, when they must leave. Often, the Home will also help kids adjust to independent living after they are “on their own.”

Mr. Otieno ended his talk by thanking our Club for its grant. He said money is always a problem at the Home, and especially lately when the State has been undergoing severe budget problems. He said Social Services is often one of the first programs put on the chopping block when money is scarce.

President Al Adams presented Mr. Otieno a check from our Club. This is the last of our Community Service Grants from last year. NOTE: Al Renz, announced that **the application for this year’s Community Service grants is now on line.** Spread the word to your youth-oriented non-profit organization.

Closing

Rev. Jim Berry led the Club in reciting the Optimist Creed to close the meeting.

Clyde Nevins

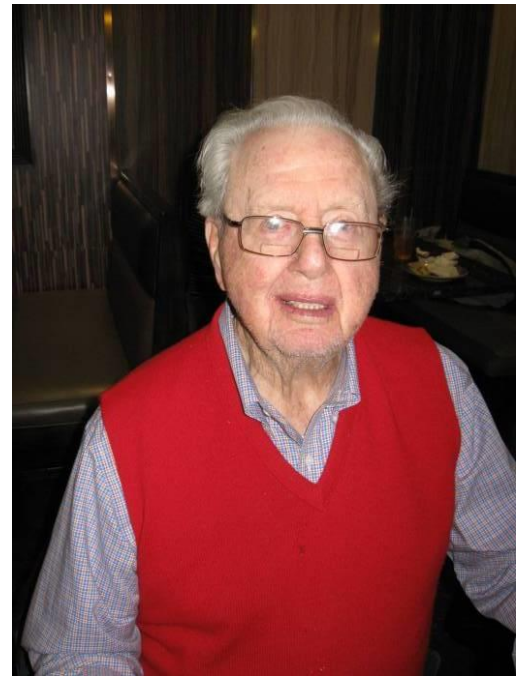
Optimistic Quote of the Week

“Dance through life. When you dance, your purpose is not to get to a certain place on the floor. It’s to enjoy each step along the way”

~Wayne Dyer

CALENDAR

- | | |
|------|--|
| 3/1 | Tuesday 4:00 pm
1st Commercial Bank – Whitesburg Dr.
Board Meeting |
| 3/3 | Thursday 6:00 pm 88 Buffet
Tiffany Martin – Hawthorne Conservatory |
| 3/10 | Thursday 11:45 am TBD
Alberto Duarte – TBD |
| 3/17 | Thursday 11:45 am
Optimist Recreation Center
Business Meeting - Food – (Alberto Duarte) |
| 3/24 | Thursday 11:45 am TBD
Alberto Duarte – TBD |
| 3/31 | Thursday NO MEETING – 5th THURSDAY |
| 4/5 | Tuesday 4:00 pm
1st Commercial Bank – Whitesburg Dr.
Board Meeting |



**Jack Freedman, Guest of
George McDonough**



**Speaker #1
Ms. Karen Mockensturm**



**President Al presents a
Community Service Grant to
Speaker # 2, Geoff Otiene**

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.

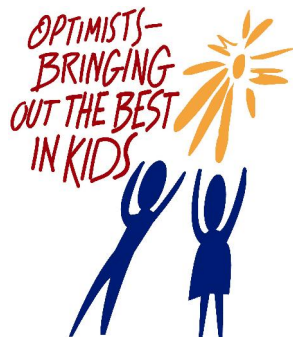
To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.

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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PLACE
STAMP
HERE

TO: