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Opti - Topics

March 2nd Regular Meeting

Seventeen Optimists and five guests assembled at the Optimist Recreation Center for our regular fourth Thursday meeting of the month. As we entered the meeting room, we were greeted by the normally bare tables sporting colorful tablecloths and candles, plus a folder at each place.



Marilyn King-Jordan arranged for our lunch today, which was prepared by our speaker (and fellow Optimist) Denise Watson and her friend and guest Debra Parham. We were served our lunch in take-out cartons, and it was later explained that our meal was typical of the one provided to the City's homeless people by our speaker as part of her ministry. The home-cooked food consisted of meat loaf, rice, corn, tossed salad, roll and peaches for desert, plus assorted iced teas.

Our guests today were:

- **Debra Parham**, guest of Marilyn King-Jordan. Debra is an Elder and Chaplain at the First Seventh Day Advent Church in Huntsville
- **Elaine Plank**, widow of the late Duane Plank, who attended today specifically to bring a guest and prospective new member
- **David Bailey**, guest of Elaine Plank. David lives across the street from Elaine and was very impressed by the Optimists who spoke at Duane's funeral. He'd been asking Elaine about us, so Elaine brought him today
- **David Myers**, Richie's Dad, was back for a second visit today before returning this week to his home in New York
- **Ann Ham**, guest of George McDonough. She's a recently acquired friend of George at his new residence at Magnolia Trace.

Club meets
1st Thursday
At 6:00 p.m. at Blue
Plate Café

3rd & 4th Thursdays
At 11:45 a.m.
Optimist Recreational
Center

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Opening

President Vastell Williams couldn't make the meeting today due to his mandatory attendance at an Alabama A & M University budget meeting. Newly elected First Vice President, Eureka Battie, presided in his stead (and did an excellent job, too). Eureka opened the meeting, said she was honored to be elected to Vice President, but wasn't expecting to preside over a meeting so soon. She called on Rev. Jim Berry to bring the opening prayer and lead us in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Optimist Family News



Today was Tom Casteel's birthday. Happy Birthday to Tom, who does so much for our Club-including straightening out your editor's Opti-Topics text when it's needed.

Announcements & Committee Reports

Secretary/Treasurer Al Renz formally announced that the Board of Directors had elected **Eureka Battie to be First Vice President of the Club** to fill the vacant office.



Gay Pepper announced that the **Respect for Law Banquet** will be held on the second Monday in May, recently rescheduled from the first Monday. As announced earlier, the banquet will be held at the Trinity Methodist Church on Airport Road.



Tri-Star Basketball Contest Chairman Jesse Lang reported that 20 to 25 kids turned out for the contest last Saturday. He thanked the several Optimists who came out to support the event.



Al Renz reported that our **Oratorical Contest** girl winner, Christine Thompson, will next compete at the Regional Competition, provided there are enough contestants to require it. If not, she will go directly to the District Competition. Our boy winner will not be able to go to the Regional Competition due to a conflict with taking his SAT exam

Program



Program Chairman Marilyn King-Jordan introduced our speaker for today's meeting, Denise Watson, Founder and CEO/President of **Hand-Up Ministries**. Marilyn said we often assume that every parent and child has daily meals and a place to live, but that isn't always the case. Denise started a ministry to bring care to those people who are without these necessities of life.

Mrs. Watson gave a brief overview of Hand-Up Ministries which she started in 2010. She said her goal today was to "share my passion" for the people she serves in her ministry. Her ministry begins Monday or Tuesday of each week with her planning the menu for meals she will take to five different homeless camps in our city. She then shops for the food items needed, then preps and prepares meals for 70 or more people which she delivers on Saturday. Any food left over is given to the elderly people in Johnson Tower.

Mrs. Watson gave a PowerPoint presentation showing how her ministry began, the type of meals prepared, and how they were served at the homeless camps. The meal we enjoyed today, she said, was typical of the nutritious and tasty food she serves to the homeless every week. It always includes an entrée, vegetables, and a green salad, since homeless people have no way to keep or prepare one. The roll or cornbread muffin that's typically included is always wrapped in aluminum foil to keep it fresh. She said that while there are other ministries providing food to the homeless, hers is the only one providing a full-course meal.

On special occasions, such as Valentine's Day, Easter and Christmas, she also tries to give each homeless person a little gift, typically obtained from thrift stores. "I want to make them feel special," she said.

Mrs. Watson presented a chart with the goals of her ministry. Her main goal is to obtain a building to house her ministry. She asked anyone knowing of a suitable warehouse to please let her know. A dedicated building will allow her ministry to provide additional programs and opportunities for "those who *really* want to leave the street." Her goal is to add a structured program for self-improvement and job hunting to help people get back on their feet.

In response to a question, Mrs. Watson said her ministry was incorporated, but had not yet received a 501(c)3 status from the IRS. She said she had now applied for the third time, and was hopeful it would be granted.

Each attendee today received a folder that included an information sheet, a ministry brochure, a refrigerator magnet, and Mrs. Watson's business card.

By the way, I talked with Denise after the meeting, and I found out she funds most of the cost of her ministry out of her own pocketbook. That's a lot of food to buy every week. She does accept donations.

Closing

President Vastell had our speaker's gratuity in his car, so our speaker didn't get one (I'm sure this will be corrected). Vastell also had the paraphernalia necessary to give out the attendance award, so we skipped that today, too.

Vice President Battie led the Club in reciting the Optimist Creed to close the meeting.

Clyde Nevins

Optimistic Quote of the Week

We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty.

~Mother Teresa

CALENDAR

4/4 Tuesday 4:00 pm 1st Commercial Bank – Whitesburg Dr.

Board Meeting

4/6 Thursday 6:00 pm Blue Plate Cafe

TBD - Eureka Battie

4/20 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center

Business Meeting - Food – (Eureka Battie)

4/27 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center

TBD - Eureka Battie -



Our Beautifully Prepared Meeting Room



Program Chairperson Marilyn King Jordan

Preparing to Serve Our Buffet Lunch



**Tom Casteel Giving a Membership
Pitch to Guest David Bailey.**

P
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Guest Debra Parham



Guest Ann Ham



**Our Speaker, Optimist Denise Watson
Founder and CEO of Hand-Up Ministries**

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:

PLACE
STAMP
HERE