



# Opti - Topics

Official Newsletter of the Optimist Club of Huntsville  
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## February Evening Meeting

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When I arrived at the dining room, there were, for whatever reason, only 10 places set for our meeting tonight. This shortly proved grossly inadequate, since we ended up with 17 Optimists, 3 guests and our speaker. Thankfully, there were spare tables in the room, and the kitchen had enough food for all of us.

Speaking of the food, we had a good meal tonight, I thought. Each attendee had a choice of a chicken, pork, or vegetarian entrée. Our meal included a tossed green salad, roll, veggies, choice of dessert (chocolate cheesecake or pecan pie) and iced tea.

Our guests tonight were Pat Lang (wife of Jesse), Dr. Pavica Sheldon and Linda Presley.

### **Opening**

President Eureka asked for introductions of our guests. Dr. Sheldon is the interim Chairperson of the Communication Arts Department at UAH, who graciously provides judges for our annual Oratorical Contest. Linda Presley was a member of the now defunct Noon Optimist Club and is still looking us over for possible membership.

Not a guest, but a welcome out-of-town member was Captain Fabiani Duarte, who was able to attend due to JAG training in Montgomery this past week.

President Eureka called on Clyde Nevins to bring the opening prayer and lead the Club in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Club meets**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Thursday**  
**At 6:00 p.m. at**  
**Huntsville Country**  
**Club**

**3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays**  
**At 11:45 a.m.**  
**Optimist Recreational**  
**Center**

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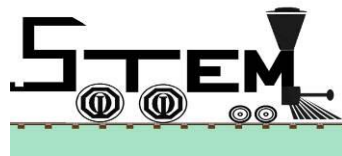
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**Announcements**



**Pancake Breakfast** Chairman Alberto Duarte asked everyone to give their \$50 for the benefit of the Hawthorne Conservatory to Al Renz ASAP. He said he is not accepting return of the 10 tickets allotted to each Optimist, only cash or check. He thanked all the Optimists who came to help out in cooking, serving, and cleaning at the breakfast. He said the proceeds from this year's breakfast would not be as much as last year due to a lower attendance.



**STEM Grant** Committee Chairman Tom Rumph announced that his committee has scheduled the **presentations** at schools that have submitted grant requests. You are welcome to participate in these, and if you'd like to be notified of when and where these are scheduled, call or e-mail Tom or Vastell Williams to be notified.



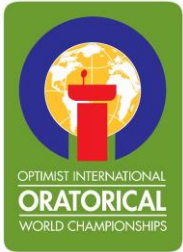
The Alabama-Mississippi District's 10<sup>th</sup> annual **JOI Club Convention** will be held in Huntsville this year (for the first time). It will be at the Sheraton Hotel at the Jetport on **March 10 & 11**. Our Club will pay registration and room charges for any local JOI Club members who attend. We are also tasked to **provide door prizes** for attendees. If you have a suitable prize, or know where to get one, notify Tom Casteel or Eureka Battie.



Our Club will again participate in the City's annual **Kite Festival** on **March 3** from 11 a.m. to 3 p. m. at the Jaycee building in John Hunt Park. Tom Casteel needs some help to man our booth at the festival and give out our Optimist balsa wood gliders and do some recruiting in the process. Come for an hour or two.



Eureka Battie announced that our gifts to Senior **Pearl girls** will be awarded at a ceremony at Jemison High School on **March 17**. Eureka will be attending, and she asked for some other Optimists to join her.



The **Oratorical Contest** is coming soon: It will be held at the Cooper House on **March 10**, beginning at 9:00 a. m. You will note that this is the same day as the beginning of the JOI Club Convention, but there should not be conflicts with the great majority of our membership. Please plan to attend and interact with the contestants and their parents. We've recruited new members from this project in the past.



**Tri-Star Basketball** Chairman Jesse Lang reminded Club members of the Tri-Star basketball competition to be held **March 17** at the Optimist Recreation Center. He needs several Optimists, both male and female, to help score the events. Flyers for the event are available to promote the contest to boys and girls from age 8 through age 13. The contest will begin at 9:30 a. m.



President Eureka has visited the Ft. Payne Optimist Club and is planning to visit the Athens Optimist Club and the Madison Optimist Club (neither is in our Zone) soon. We get Achievement and Award (A&A) points for these visits if 4 or more members of our Club do the visiting. Contact Eureka if you're willing to go with her.

## Program



Jesse Lang introduced our program for the evening, who was, in fact, his daughter Portia Lang. Portia is the Case Service Coordinator for the Alabama Chapter of the ALS Association, a nationally affiliated not-for-profit health organization dedicated to fight against ALS (also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease). Portia is a licensed social worker with a Bachelor's Degree from Alabama A & M and a Master's Degree from UA Tuscaloosa. Jesse said his daughter's motto is "If I can help someone along the way, then my living will not be in vain."

Portia is the Care Coordinator for ALS in our part of the state. Portia said her job is to bring whatever relief and information she can to those in our area who have ALS in the northeast part of Alabama. There are special “tools” to help ALS people manage their daily chores (e.g., brushing teeth) without help. She also has access to grants for transportation needs

Portia described Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis disease and the effects it has on a person afflicted with it. Some statistics:

- There are two types of ALS, sporadic (90%) and familial (10 %)
- No two people have the same progression of the disease
- Life expectancy is typically between 2 and 5 years
- Most people are between the ages of 40 and 70 when afflicted
- The disease seems somewhat more prevalent with those who have played football and those in the military
- Approximately 30,000 people in the U. S. are living with the disease at any one time
- Currently, there are about 200 people with ALS in Alabama (10 in Portia’s region)

Huntsville is blessed to have an excellent ALS Care Clinic at Crestwood Hospital. At this clinic, in one convenient location are the doctors, therapists, specialists and consultants to serve those with ALS.

Those with ALS have extremely high medical expenses, and the ALS Association needs contributions to help them. The ice-bucket challenge has been used to raise millions of dollars for ALS, and this will be conducted again in August. Another way to contribute is to participate in the annual “Walk to Defeat ALS” event in Huntsville which will be held on October 7 at the HudsonAlpha Institute campus in Research Park.

## **Closing**

President Eureka gave Portia one of our Optimist Creed tiles and thanked her for her informative presentation. She asked her to draw for the attendance prize. Al Renz won the pot on the first draw. Note: this is the second time Al’s won in the past three months.

*Clyde Nevins*

## **Optimistic Quote of the Week**

**“Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, you'll start having positive results”**

*~ Willie Nelson*

# PHOTOS



**Our speaker, Portia Lang**

**ALS Association**





**Fabiani Duarte with Gay Pepper**



**Visitor Dr. Pavica Sheldon**



**Visitor Linda Presley**

## CALENDAR

- FEB 22 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center  
**Business Meeting - Food – (Matt Clarke)**
- MAR 3 Saturday 10.00 am to 2 pm **John Hunt Park**  
**Kite Festival**
- MAR 6 Tuesday 4:00 pm 1st Commercial Bank – Whitesburg Dr.  
**Board Meeting**
- MAR 8 Thursday **6:00 pm** Huntsville Country Club  
**Tom Casteel- TBD**
- MAR 10 Saturday 9.00 am **Cooper House**  
**Oratorical Contest**
- MAR 10 Saturday 10.00 am **Four Points by Sheraton Huntsville Airport**  
**District Junior Optimist (JOI) Convention**
- MAR 17 Saturday 9.00 am to 11:00 am **Optimist Recreation Center**  
**TRI – Star Basketball**
- MAR 22 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center  
**Business Meeting - Food – (Tom Casteel)**
- APR 2 Tuesday 4:00 pm 1st Commercial Bank – Whitesburg Dr.  
**Board Meeting**
- APR 12 Thursday **6:00 pm** Huntsville Country Club  
**Charlene Higgins - TBD**
- APR 26 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center  
**Business Meeting - Food – (Charlene Higgins)**

Website: [hsvoptimists.org](http://hsvoptimists.org)



**Huntsville Optimist Club**  
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**TO:**



## 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 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, and stay, happy for the presence of trouble for fear, and also happy for the absence of trouble.

Optimist International