



# Opti - Topics

Bulletin of the Optimist Club of Huntsville

VOL. 66, No.14, January 26, 2012

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Twenty one Optimists attended the meeting on a rainy day. President Jim Pepper called on Dr. Sidney Sandridge to open the meeting with prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance .

Jack Fauble reported that one essay has been submitted by mail, and many more are being solicited. Jack will "bait the hook" this week by sending a note to the known sources of essays to remind them that only 10 days are left before the deadline for submittal of their essays. Judges are in place, and he has the winners' medallions in hand.

Alberto is also reminding his sources for the Oratorical Contest, especially the sponsors of the JOOI clubs, of the looming deadline for contestants to prepare their speeches and provide a written transcript. He is looking forward to having the contest in the Cooper House this year.

Fabiani reported on his several activities in activating new JOOI clubs. He met Monday with **Morris Elementary** and set the dates for an orientation meeting with the parents (Feb. 6) and an installation ceremony (Feb. 16). He also met with **Madison Academy** schools. He said the girls are very enthusiastic, the boys not so much, about starting their clubs. Sponsors of the three clubs have been identified.

**Chapman MS** is also very interested in starting a club, and he will meet with them tomorrow (Friday) afternoon. He has also contacted all the Huntsville School's middle school principals that attended their recent meeting.

Fabiani asked the club about separating the election of the JOOI club officers from the installation ceremony. Grace Lutheran School separated these, while Whitesburg MS held them jointly-- which turned out make the meeting excessively long. The consensus was that separating the two events would be best, especially in considering that Optimists are not necessary at the election of JOOI club officers.

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Fabiani introduced the program speakers: Ms. Anna Manning, Director of Community Events for the Huntsville Hospital Foundation, and Ms. Traci Conley, Nurse Educator for the Neonatal ICU at the Huntsville Women's and Children's Hospital .

Ms. Manning spoke about the Huntsville Hospital Foundation and the several programs it supports and/or sponsors such as the Heart Shot Tennis Event in February, the Huntsville Classic Dinner & Golf Tournament in May, and the Liz Hurley Ribbon Run in October. She recounted the story of Amy and Chris George's founding the Melissa George Neonatal Fund after the loss of one of their twin daughter, Melissa Suzanne George in 2005. Since then the Melissa George Neonatal Memorial Fund has raised \$1,400,000 to support the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

She showed a short video on the NICU narrated by Channel 19's Jerry Hayes that brought tears to many eyes (mine, anyway). She stated there is a lot of community support required since Huntsville Hospital is a not-for-profit hospital and receives no tax money. She welcomed the Optimist Club to arrange a tour of the NICU, and also to contribute to the financial support that is needed.

Ms. Conley related how the nurses interact with both the babies and their parents (and other relatives). Most of the babies that come to the NICU are premature, "26 weekers" or later, but they treat others who are there because of physical problems discovered after their birth. There are 137 nurses and four physicians at the NICU which has 45 beds (expandable if necessary to a maximum of 70 beds). There is a Neonatal Transportation team which has brought babies to the NICU from as far away as Cullman.

. She reported that of those delivered at 23 weeks only about 10% survive, while those delivered at 24 weeks have a 50-50 chance of survival. Babies as small as 13 ounces have been treated in the NICU. She told how the health of mothers has deteriorated in recent years; many more are smoking and using drugs than in past years. Parents of babies who do not survive are given special treatment to ease their pain.

Tom Casteel and Jim & Gay Pepper have had grandchildren treated at the NICU, and both spoke very highly of their experience there.

Ms. Conley drew names for the door prize. Chev Kellogg and Joe Pullen missed out, so Duane Plank pocketed the money.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clyde Perkins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'C' and 'P'.

## Optimistic Quote of the Week

**“I have become my own version of an optimist. If I can't make it through one door, I'll go through another door - or I'll make a door. Something terrific will come no matter how dark the present. “**

~ Rabindranath Tagore

## CALENDAR

- |      |                   |  |
|------|-------------------|--|
| 2/2  | Thursday 11:45 am | Downtown Holiday Inn<br><b>Mrs. Pat Maloney - VA Vocational Rehab and Employment</b>             |
| 2/7  | Tuesday 4:00 pm   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Commercial Bank<br><b>Board Meeting</b>  |
| 2/9  | Thursday 11:45 am | Downtown Holiday Inn<br><b>Mrs. Bryon Dodson - President &amp; CEO<br/>Phoenix of Huntsville</b> |
| 2/16 | Thursday 11:45 am | Optimist Recreation Center<br><b>Business Meeting - Food – (Byrom Goodwin)</b>                   |
| 2/23 | Thursday 11:45 am | Downtown Holiday Inn<br><b>Mr. Brooks Wilborn - Big Brothers-Big Sisters</b>                     |