



Opti - Topics

Bulletin of the Optimist Club of Huntsville

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OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Jim Pepper
256-655-9659
jpepper777@msn.com

1st VICE PRESIDENT

Tom Casteel
256-882-9380
tom@leetsac.net

2nd VICE PRESIDENT

Jack Fauble
256-771-1092
poorfarm2006@aol.com

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Al Renz
256-772-7929
optimist3480@aol.com

PAST PRESIDENT

Jim Roe
256-883-8950
j_m_roe@yahoo.com

Opening

Eighteen on-time Optimists and two late-comer Optimists joined with our five guests at the Holiday Inn. Three of our guests were the mother, Mrs. Frances Clayton, and grandparents, Mr. & Mrs. W. F. Sanders, of our speaker, and the fifth guest was a potential Optimist, Ms. Jane Shinn, a school representative and PTA advisor from Morris Elementary School. Jane was a guest of either Tom Casteel or Fabiani Duarte, depending on whom you asked. Zack Thompson offered to sponsor her for membership.

Business Briefs

President Jim Pepper called on Dr. Sidney Sandridge to open in prayer and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice President Tom Casteel awarded the Honor Club President's pin to Past President Jim Roe. Tom also reported that the club's shirts should arrive by March 7, and that their cost has been cut to \$16 due to his getting a discount coupon from the District. Those who ordered shirts will have the shirt cost added to their next dues bill.

Al Renz reported that contrary to e-mails being sent in his name asking for money, he has not been mugged and robbed of his money in England.

Jack Fauble announced the winner of the Essay Contest, Hema Pengali of Randolph High School. She will be invited to attend our luncheon meeting on May 24 to read her essay and receive her award.

Fabiani Duarte reported he had a good meeting of a potential JOOI Club in Hampton Cove. Also, Morris Elementary School's JOOI Club has changed their meeting

DIRECTORS

2 YR

Alfred G. Adams
502-541-6469

alfredg.adams@gmail.com

Byrom Goodwin
256-881-3113

Bob Martin
256-722-8062

bmartin12@bellsouth.net

1 YR

Jim Berry
256-539-2101

jberryn@bellsouth.net

Connie Gipson
256-534-1384

cfgipson@yahoo.com

Matt Hancock
256-990-0077

wmhancock@wolfejones.com

day to Monday at 2:30 p. m. Another Point of Contact for this club is needed, so if you are available at that time, please volunteer! Hazel Green's installation ceremony has been rescheduled to either Mar. 7 or Mar. 14, according to Jim Pepper.

Alberto Duarte reported that as of now he knows of no confirmed entries in our Oratorical Contest on Mar. 10. He is not worried, since their speeches are not due until the day of the contest, but he asked all the Points of Contact to keep soliciting speeches from our JOOI clubs.

Widow's Mite Foundation

This month's speaker coordinator, Jim Berry, introduced Sanders Clayton, CEO and director of the Widow's Mite Foundation. Sanders is a 17-year old junior at Randolph High School. There she plays varsity softball and plays bass clarinet in the band. She has volunteered at Merrimack Hall summer camps working with special needs children to dance, make music and create art.

Sanders recounted how for several years she has attended a Christian athletics camp, Camp Kannakuk, in Missouri. Last year she was led to find a way to sponsor underprivileged teen-aged girls to the camp. She readily raised \$28,000 from friends and relatives to do this, but found that locating the girls to sponsor was much more difficult than raising the money.

She contacted DHR for potential girls to sponsor from those in foster care or who were orphans, and eventually found 5 girls willing and able to go. They were given money they needed for camp, including that needed for suitable clothes, food, transportation and camp fees. Sanders reported that she was profoundly moved by how few of the pleasures we take for granted had been experienced by these girls. After the girls returned from camp, she had great joy in hearing them relate their experiences there, highlighted by four of the five girls accepting Christ.

Sanders had substantial money remaining from her donations, and she used part of this to sponsor 15 special needs students at a summer arts camp at Merrimack Hall. She also has funds to sponsor 6 more girls to Camp Kannakuk this summer.

Sanders says that every minute working with children with disabilities is more than a blessing, and her experiences with teenagers sent to Camp Kannakuk has been beyond rewarding. She plans to study special education in college and looks forward to a lifetime of serving and spending time with children.

Closing

The meeting closed at about 12:50 p.m. (good going, Jim!). Alfred Adams won the attendance prize on the first drawing. Alfred donated his winnings to the Widow's Mite Foundation.

Clyde Nevins

Optimistic Quote of the Week

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

~Anne Frank

CALENDAR

3/6 Tuesday 4:00 pm 1st Commercial Bank

Club Board Meeting

3/8 Thursday 11:45 am Downtown Holiday Inn

Dr. Sidney Sandridge - Country Preacher

3/15 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center

Business Meeting - Food - (Jim Berry)

3/22 Thursday 11:45 am Downtown Holiday Inn

George McDonough - Center for Aging

3/29 **5TH THURSDAY - NO MEETING**