



Opti - Topics

Bulletin of the Optimist Club of Huntsville

VOL. 66, No. 40 September 6, 2012

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Nineteen Optimists and two guests assembled at the Downtown Holiday Inn today. The attendees enjoyed a buffet lunch with an array of high-calorie deserts to choose from.

Opening

President Tom Casteel, back from his trip to Canada, asked Jim Berry to give the invocation. Jim also led the pledge of allegiance. Our two guests were Marlene Renz and James Cotton. James, a retired Methodist preacher, was the guest of Jim Berry (surprise, surprise).

Tom announced that he needs 5 more Optimists to sign up for being a monthly program chairman and arranging for the business meeting lunches. Tom also announced he is staffing all of the Club's committees and JOOI Club interfaces for his upcoming administration. Sign-up sheets were passed around for those who had not previously filled one out. Tom reminded us that just sponsoring the JOOI Clubs will take more new members. Recruit!

Gay Pepper announced that arrangements for the Club's **annual picnic** are complete. The picnic will be held at the Everybody Can Play playground, off of Drake Avenue, on Saturday, Sept. 15, at 3:30 p. m. The Club will supply the meat, drinks, plates and utensils, but every attendee is asked to bring a side dish (salad, vegetable, desert, etc.).

Tom reported he will be bringing to the board of directors, and subsequently to a Club business meeting, a **procedure for bringing in new members**. When our Club bylaws were revised some years ago, the membership procedure in them was deleted in order to make it a local matter not needing OI approval (as are any bylaw revisions). It was intended to include a membership procedure in the

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Club's policy manual, but this fell through the cracks. The proposed procedure is given later in this newsletter.

Program



Fabiani Duarte reported that Dr. Wardynski had to be out of town today, but would be rescheduled for a

future Club meeting. He introduced today's speaker, Mrs. Debra Jenkins, co-founder and acting Executive Director of Merrimack Hall. Mrs. Jenkins recounted how she and her husband had sought a way to give back to the community from their prosperity in developing commercial property in Huntsville. She and her husband were both interested in the arts, and their efforts turned in that direction.

Soon thereafter, they learned of a property in southwest Huntsville, on Triana Boulevard, that was up for sale. Renovation took about three million dollars, and Merrimack Theater was born, and it opened in July, 2007. It provides a season of music, theater and dance performances in a hall with great acoustics, comfortable seating, and free parking.

After seeing a TV program and follow-up article in People magazine on how ballet had been used as physical therapy, she created a similar program not specifically directed to medical therapy, but tailored to use arts education for recreational and social support for people of disabilities. The first program of this new venture started with 10 children and 10 volunteers and has grown to 90 participants with 9 classes per week.

Later, Project UP was begun to provide teens and young adults with developmental disabilities (e.g., Down syndrome or autism) opportunities to put on public performances throughout the year. A team of Project UP dancers competed in a state-wide dance competition of 300 invited dance studios and took home two platinum awards and a 1st place in one category.

Another new component of Merrimack Hall is the Connection Workshops. This program is designed to provide, through social and cultural events, opportunities for people of

disability to meet and form meaningful and lasting relationships with volunteers from the community. Merrimack Hall is recruiting more volunteers for this program—both those who can attend an event on an occasional basis, and those who can attend regularly.

The goal of Merrimack Hall is to become self-sustaining through the receipts of their performances. Many good shows are coming up this season, beginning this week with Justin Willman, host of “Cupcake Wars” and “Last Cake Standing” on The Food Network. Justin will also host a workshop for students over 13 years old with special needs while in Huntsville. Check out the shows coming this season at www.merrimackhall.com or by phone at (256) 534-6455.

Volunteers are needed. Anyone 14 years and up is welcome.

Closing

Mrs. Jenkins had to call three names to get a winner of the attendance prize. Nancy Vaughn and Jack Wolfe missed out, but Jesse Lang was in attendance and carried home the money. Carl Winkler closed the meeting by leading the recitation of the Optimist Creed.

Don't Forget: WE NEED MORE MEMBERS!

Invite someone to our September 15th picnic.

Clyde Nevins

Optimistic Quote of the Week

“Search for the seed of good in every adversity. Master that principle and you will own a precious shield that will guard you well through all the darkest valleys you must traverse. Stars may be seen from the bottom of a deep well, when they cannot be discerned from the mountaintop. So will you learn things in adversity that you would never have discovered without trouble. There is always a seed of good. Find it and prosper.”

Og Mandino

CALENDAR

9/11 Tuesday 4:00 pm 1st Commercial Bank

Board Meeting

9/13 Thursday - **NO MEETING**

PICNIC SATURDAY

9/15 Saturday 3:30 pm Everybody Can Play
Playground

Annual Picnic

9/20 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center

Business Meeting - Food - (Jim Roe)

9/27 Thursday 11:45 am Downtown Holiday Inn

Officer Installation by Governor Helen Howard

10/2 Tuesday 4:00 pm 1st Commercial Bank

Board Meeting

10/4 Thursday 11:45 am Downtown Holiday Inn

TBD - Fabiani Duarte

10/11 Thursday 11:45 am Downtown Holiday Inn

TBD - Fabiani Duarte

10/18 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center

Business Meeting - Food - (Fabiani Duarte)

10/25 Thursday 11:45 am Downtown Holiday Inn

TBD - Fabiani Duarte

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: