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Club meets
1st, 2nd, & 4th Thursdays
At 11:45 am
Downtown Holiday Inn
Huntsville, AL

Opti - Topics

Nineteen Optimists and three guests assembled at the Downtown Holiday Inn. Two of our guests were prospective new members, Jim and Peggy Otto, invited by Jim Berry, and our third guest was Guy Kubic, invited by Bill Peters. Milt Williams was back in action after his stay in Huntsville Hospital last month for a blood clot problem, and it was good to have Matt Hancock with us.

Opening

President Tom Casteel asked Jim Berry to give the invocation and Gay Pepper to lead the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Al Renz distributed the dues statements for this quarter.

Business and Announcements

President Tom Casteel briefly presented some business items:

- In accordance with our recently adopted procedure for processing new member applicants, Tom asked Jim and Peggy Otto to step outside the meeting room while the Club members voted on their membership. Al Renz moved to accept the Ottos for membership, and the motion passed unanimously.
- Tom announced that the Club's **Tri-Star Basketball Contest** will be on Saturday, Jan. 19, at the Optimist Recreation Center. Be there at 9:00 a. m. to help contest Chairman Jesse Lang keep the events moving along.

**Our business meeting
is held on the 3rd
Thursday of the
month at the Optimist
Recreation Center on
Oakwood Avenue**

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- Tom reported on two significant items from this month's Board of Directors Meeting:

(1) A new youth project was proposed to the Club by Semper Fi, and was favorably received by the Board. This will be explained and proposed to the membership at next week's business meeting.

(2) The Board voted to increase the prize money for the **Oratorical and Essay Contests** to \$300 for first place, \$200 for second place and \$100 for third place. The budget was revised to take the extra \$750 needed for this increase from the Band Instrument program, specifically from the amount budgeted for buying new instruments.

- Tom distributed to all attendees a small card with the URL for our Club's **web site**. The card also shows the *user name* and *password* needed to access information by Club members, for those of you (like your editor) who cannot remember them. Our web site has, as examples, all of our Club's newsletters dating back to 2004, a roster of the monthly program chairs for this year, committee assignments, and a club roster with everyone's phone and email. The user name and password is needed to access this section of the site.

- Ten tickets for the **pancake breakfast** on January 26 were distributed to each member present. As it was for the previous years, tickets are \$5.00 each.

- The installation of **JOOI Club** officers at Hampton Cove Middle School will be Monday, January 14 at 8:30 a. m. at the school. Come if you can.

Program

This month's program chairman, Milt Williams, introduced our speaker for today, Burr Ingram, Vice President for Communications & Marketing for Huntsville Hospital.



Mr. Ingram began by recounting the history of Huntsville Hospital which started in 1895 by United Charities (a women's organization) with 12 beds to care for poor and indigent Huntsvillians. The first building on the current site at Governors Drive and Madison was built in 1926 with 50 beds.

Today, Huntsville Hospital is the second largest hospital in Alabama. It has facilities with 881 beds (plus 60 in Madison). It is the second largest employer (after Redstone Arsenal) in the county with about 7,000 employees and a \$400,000,000 payroll. Last year, Huntsville Hospital treated over 140,000 people in its Emergency Room, delivered 5,125 babies, and had over 45,000 patients that spent at least one night in the hospital. Interestingly, about one half of the patients at Huntsville Hospital are from outside Madison County.

Mr. Ingram next described how Huntsville Hospital spread its influence in North Alabama by affiliating with hospitals in smaller cities that were losing big money due to lack of patients. Through the Huntsville Hospital Health System, Huntsville Hospital has either acquired or provided management for hospitals in Decatur, Hartselle, Moulton, the Shoals, and Athens.

Mr. Ingram concluded his informative talk by giving a picture of health care in the future. Due to the demographics of our aging population (10,000 people *per day* turn 65 years of age), the cost of care will increase dramatically unless controls are put in place. In general these controls, now part of The Affordable Care Act, are designated as "managed care." Under managed care, the Federal Government will provide a *fixed amount* of money for designated regions. Health care providers in these regions will be charged with providing the health care needed for *all* the citizens living there. The concept is to provide an incentive for only the *necessary* health care services; i.e., not pay individually for every service actually done. Costs above the total allocated amounts will have to be "eaten" by the health care providers.

To conclude his talk, Mr. Ingram gave these answers to three questions from attendees:

1. Huntsville Hospital does not have a geriatric care unit.
2. The cost of indigent and uninsured patients amounts to about 15% of the total budget.
3. If he could change one thing about Huntsville Hospital, he would like the Emergency Room to be only for emergencies and not be a doctor's office for those who have no doctor.

Closing

Our guest speaker drew Byrom Goodwin's name for the attendance prize on the first try. Carl Winkler led in reciting the Optimist Creed to close the meeting.

Clyde Nevins

Optimistic Quote of the Week

"The two most important days in your life are the day you were born, and the day you find out why."

~Mark Twain

CALENDAR

1/17 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center

Business Meeting - Food – (Milt Williams)

1/19 Thursday 9:30 – 11:30 am Optimist Recreation Center

Tri-Star Basketball Competition

1/24 Thursday 11:45 am Downtown Holiday Inn

Doreen Forsythe - NASA Solar System Ambassador

1/26 Saturday 7:30 to 11:30 am **Cooper House**

405 Randolph Ave. SE

Annual Pancake Breakfast

1/31 **5TH THURSDAY - NO MEETING**