



**OPTIMIST  
INTERNATIONAL**

*Friend of Youth*

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**Club meets**

**1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays**

**At 11:45 am**

**Downtown Holiday Inn  
Huntsville, AL**

**Our business meeting  
is held on the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Thursday of the  
month at the Optimist  
Recreation Center on  
Oakwood Ave**

# Opti - Topics

## Opening

A near-record crowd of twenty-nine Optimists and guests assembled at the Downtown Holiday Inn today for our regular Thursday luncheon. Our guests today were Nita Peters, wife of Bill, and Kathy Anderson, daughter of George McDonough.

President George McDonough asked Dr. Sidney Sandridge to give the invocation and Dr. Bill Clarke to lead in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

## Announcements

President George announced that, at long last, he has identified two candidates for our luncheon meetings next year. He said he had personally surveyed 12 to 15 places before settling on these two. He said one is very good, and the other is acceptable (he didn't name names). He, Jim Roe, Tom Casteel and Alfred Adams made a "test run" on one of these on Wednesday, and were generally satisfied of both the accommodations and the food. The specifics of those selected will be presented for a vote at the upcoming business meeting.



Since this was to be our last regular luncheon meeting at the Downtown Holiday Inn, President George asked Gay Pepper to come forward and say a few words. Gay, in turn, asked our servers Vern and Jennifer, to come forward. Gay, John Inman and Tim Vander Veer made short laudatory speeches about how much the Club has appreciated both the good service and the friendly

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attitudes of our two servers. Gay then presented the monetary gifts that had been collected for them at the November business meeting. In receiving her gift, Vern said, "Don't make me cry," "I love you guys," and "I'm going to miss y'all."

## **Program**



Program Chairman Jim Roe introduced our speaker for today, Bill McDowell. Bill is the full-time director of Second Mile

Development, a non-profit organization begun in December of 1989 to work in the Terry Heights and Hollandale neighborhoods of northwest Huntsville.

Bill related how he saw a survey of English words, showing that about 75% of the words in our language have negative overtones, and only 25% have positive overtones. He commended our Club for emphasizing the 25% that is positive.

Second Mile chose the Terry Heights and Hollandale area for their focus based on a survey made of Huntsville neighborhoods in the mid 80's. These neighborhoods, at that time, had the highest crime rate, the most families below poverty level, the lowest academic standing, the highest juvenile delinquency rate, and the second highest unemployment rate. Also, more families rented their homes than owned them in this area.

In large part due to the organization's efforts, this area has made tremendous strides. It now has the lowest crime rate of any low-income neighborhood in Huntsville and more home-owners than renters. Perhaps because of this improvement, the Huntsville Board of Education has chosen the current Terry Heights school grounds for the site of the new University Place elementary school to be built in 2016.

The fundamental principal followed by the organization is that people should earn what they get, and not simply be given their needs. This gives parents, especially, the self-esteem and responsibility that comes with their providing for the children themselves.

Their two main programs of Second Mile are the preschool and the thrift stores. The preschool was formed to give young children successful experiences and to help them develop listening skills, verbal expression, respect for authority, sensitivity to the feelings of others, appreciation of individuality, and pride in their work. Parents must pay \$30 per week for each child, and the preschool is full. If parents cannot afford to pay, they are given the opportunity to work in the thrift stores and thereby earn the money to pay.

The thrift store, called the Neighborhood Thrift Store (at 2815 University Drive), was begun 25 years ago.. It is a typical thrift store, with the exception that low-income parents can work in the store to pay for things they want. Last year, more than \$100,000 credit for merchandise was earned by parents. Bill said this is especially important at Christmas time, because parents can provide a personally chosen and worked-for gift for each child, regardless of the money available to them. He said this gives the parent the joy of giving which would otherwise be missed.

A second thrift store, the Neighborhood Baby Thrift Store, was begun in 1993 at 2320 Governor's Drive. It is designed to provide mothers of infants their baby needs at a reasonable cost.

Bill said that the thrift stores are "not a good business model." They sell merchandise at about half of their cost. "You don't make it up in volume" with this business model.

Bill thanked the Club for the batteries donated by individual Optimists. He said they will be installed in toys sold at the thrift store.

## **Closing**

President George thanked our speaker for his talk, and gave him a tile with the Optimist Creed as a memento. He asked Mr. McDowell to draw for our attendance prize. Byrom Goodwin's name was drawn first, and he missed out by not being present. Alberto Duarte's name was drawn second, and he took home the money.

Tim Vander Veer announced that this will mark his last attendance at a regular Optimist Club meeting. He said he had taken a job at Fort Knox, Ky, and will be moving there shortly. He made a brief speech, expressing optimism that with the two new young people joining our Club we are attracting younger people in our Club. He will attend the Christmas party next week, so let's all wish Tim God speed in his new endeavors.

Dr. Carl Winkler led the Club in reciting the Optimist Creed to close the meeting.

*Clyde Nevins*

## Optimistic Quote of the Week

**“I am fundamentally an optimist. Whether that comes from nature or nurture, I cannot say. Part of being optimistic is keeping one's head pointed toward the sun, one's feet moving forward. There were many dark moments when my faith in humanity was sorely tested, but I would not and could not give myself up to despair. That way lays defeat and death.”**

*~Nelson Mandela  
(1918-2013)*

## CALENDAR

- 12/12      Thursday 6:30 pm      Downtown Holiday Inn  
**Annual Christmas Party**
- 12/19      Thursday 11:45 am      Optimist Recreation Center  
**Business Meeting - Food - (Jim Roe)**



**12/26      Thursday      No Meeting (Christmas)**



**1/2/14      Thursday      No Meeting (New Years)**

# - PHOTOS -



**President George McDonough, Our Speaker Bill McDowell, and Jim Roe**



**Vern, Jennifer, and Gay Pepper**



**Alfred Adams**



**Nita and Bill Peters**

## 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 of 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 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:**