



## **PRESIDENT**

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## **SECRETARY TREASURER**

**Al Renz**

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**Club meets**

**1<sup>st</sup> Thursday**

**At 6:00 pm**

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

**At 11:45 am**

**Mullins Restaurant**

# Opti - Topics

## **Tonight's Meeting Mullins Restaurant**

Another slim turnout of 12 Optimists showed up for our meeting today. We were glad to see Kathy Anderson with us for a luncheon meeting. We had one guest, Jack Freedman, guest of George McDonough.

Mullins is varying the menu for the Thursday lunch specials, which keeps us from having to order the same old thing at our meetings. Today's specials were either a grilled pork chop or liver (no takers that I saw), plus there was strawberry shortcake on the dessert list. The pork chop was pretty good, as was the strawberry shortcake.

## **Opening**

President Al called on Rev. Jim Berry to bring the opening prayer, but Jim deferred to our guest speaker, a former pastor. President Al led the Club in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **Optimist Family News**

**Tom Casteel** is part way through his daily radiation treatments on his vocal cord, and they are making his voice quite raspy. He told me the effects will probably worsen, too.

**Duane Plank** fell last week and broke his hip. He is in room 374 at Crestwood Hospital. I tried to call him to get more information, but his room didn't answer.

**Nelly Duarte**, Alberto's wife, will be having knee replacement surgery next Wednesday.

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

## **DIRECTORS**

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## **NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

**Clyde Nevins**  
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**Buddy Beck** was in the hospital last week because of breathing difficulties. His doctors did a number of tests, and determined that his problem was due to anxiety. He's taking medication which helps his breathing, but he can't sleep. Also, because of his Parkinson's symptoms, doctors have told him to stop driving.

**George Merritt** passed away in his sleep on October 22, 2015. George was a charter member of the Noon Club for 49 years. A celebration of his life will be held on Friday, October 16. Visitation from 10:00-11:00AM in the First Baptist Huntsville Chapel. The memorial service will follow at 11:00AM in the First Baptist Huntsville Chapel

## **Announcements**



The **Club's Tri-Star Basketball Contest** has been scheduled for January 16, 2015 at the ORC. Chairman Jesse Lang still needs a few more Optimists to help run the three competitions.



Chairperson Kathy Anderson has signed us up for a spot in the upcoming **Veterans' Day Parade**. She has forecast us to have two cars and 20 marchers. We hope to have two or three JOOI Clubs participate, and JOOI Club Contacts are asked to contact their clubs about participating.



George McDonough reminded everyone of the upcoming Zack Thompson Memorial Conference on "**Effective Medication Management for Older Adults.**" He hopes to have a full house. He said Betty Thompson will give a short talk about Zack, and he will tell about Zack's contribution to the Center for Aging. It will be held at the First Baptist Church's Life Center, Entrance #7, from **12:30 to 3:30 p.m. on October 16, 2015.**



Alberto Duarte announced that his two **JOOI Clubs** will be having their **Officer Installation Ceremonies** soon. The first one of these, for Randolph School, will be held next Tuesday, October 13, at 9:15 a. m. at the Randolph Upper School on Garth Road. Refreshments will be served, and he would like to see a good turnout of Club members to support this event.

## Program



October Program Chairman Alberto Duarte introduced our speaker for today, Mr. Richard Reynolds, who is Director and Principal of the school, a position he has held for 8 years.

Mr. Reynolds opened his talk by saying that the school has been a “North Alabama gem” for 48 years. It is not “just another private school.” It is the only school of its kind between Nashville and Birmingham. The school focuses on K-12 education for students with conditions such as Autism, Asperger, Dyslexia, OCD, ODD and ADD/ADHDD. It is targeted for students from middle-class families with these learning difficulties from Huntsville and surrounding counties. Interestingly, some learning difficulties, like Autism, are more prevalent in highly educated families working in science, engineering or military; thus, Huntsville has a higher than average incidence per capita of students with these difficulties.

The school is located off of Governor’s Drive, just behind Captain D’s, in a building that is owned by the First Baptist Church. Currently, the FBC does not charge rent for the building occupied school, and the school’s staff does all the maintenance on the building (Mr. Reynolds trimmed bushes before coming to the meeting). The FBC, however, has given notice that this arrangement will be over as of next May.

Typically, students with learning difficulties do not do well in large schools. Large schools, like Huntsville High with about 1,500 students promote anxiety about doing simple daily tasks such as getting what is needed from a locker and getting to the next class. What is needed, he said, is putting the students in an environment where “one size does not fit all.” The school does not follow traditional trails. His students tend to not be good test takers, for example, and need a lot of help in how to get along with others.

The school currently has 34 students, and charges a mere \$595 per month for tuition, with no contract, for each student. At times, even this low tuition is reduced for families experiencing financial difficulties. The school uses modern technology, and has 12 Dell Chromebooks which have programs to both diagnose and improve reading skills. The main objective is to “get kids to read well; then they can do anything.” Mr. Reynolds says their goal is to make students want to learn and to become life-long learners.

Mr. Reynolds closed his talk by complementing our Club on the work we do for kids.

### **Question and Answer Session**

**Q.** Jesse Lang asked where the school got its funding.

**A.** Tuitions are the main source of revenue, but the school does get a few grants from civic organizations. The rent-free arrangement with the FBC is a big help, but that will be over next May.

**Q.** Clyde Nevins asked about the number of classrooms and teachers at the school.

**A.** There are four teachers and four classrooms at the school. There are no more than 8 or 9 in each class. The four classes are:

- Young elementary (grades K thru 2)
- Older elementary (grades 3 thru 6)
- Middle school (7 and 8)
- High school (9 thru 12)

**Q.** George McDonough asked if volunteers were used at the school.

**A.** A few volunteers are used for tutoring, but they have to be screened to not be “helicopter” helpers; i. e., hovering over the student and doing everything for them.

**Q.** Jim Berry asked if the school was a 501(c)3 organization, and if so, was it part of the United Way campaign.

**A.** The school is a 501(c)3, non-profit organization, but not part of the United Way or Combined Federal Campaign fundraisers, mainly because the time and effort needed to join these campaigns are not worth the money received.

**Q.** Al Renz asked about the school's total annual budget.

**A.** It all depends, but generally ranges between \$200,000 and \$250,000. The budget is totally dependent on the revenue received, and varies because revenue is affected non-payment of tuition and the infrequent grants received.

### **Closing**

President Al gave a tile with the Optimist to Mr. Reynolds, who said he would display it prominently. Mr. Reynolds drew for our attendance prize, and the names of Jeff Sandridge and Matt Clarke were drawn before Jim Berry took home the money.

Dr. Carl Winkler led us in the reciting the Optimist Creed.

*Clyde Nevins*

## **Optimistic Quote of the Week**

**“Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace.”**

*~Confucius*



**Mr. Richard Reynolds**

**Huntsville Achievement School**

**- PHOTOS -**



**Guest Jack Freedman**

**with George McDonough**

## CALENDAR

- 10/15 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center  
**Business Meeting - Food - (Alberto Duarte)**
- 10/22 Thursday 11:45 am Mullin's Restaurant  
**TBD - Alberto Duarte**
- 10/29 Thursday  
**NO MEETING - 5<sup>th</sup> Thursday**
- 11/3 Tuesday 4:00 pm 1st Commercial Bank - Whitesburg Dr.  
**Board Meeting**
- 11/5 Thursday 6:00 pm Mullin's Restaurant  
**TBD -**
- 11/12 Thursday 11:45 am Mullin's Restaurant  
**TBD -**
- 11/19 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center  
**Business Meeting - Food - (TBD)**
- 11/26 Thursday 11:45 am Mullin's Restaurant  
**TBD -**
- 12/3 Tuesday 4:00 pm 1st Commercial Bank - Whitesburg Dr.  
**Board Meeting**
- 12/5 Thursday 6:00 pm Mullin's Restaurant  
**TBD -**



## 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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PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

**TO:**