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# Opti - Topics

## April Evening Meeting



Eleven members and four guests assembled at the Blue Plate Café this evening for our regularly scheduled evening meeting on the first Thursday of the month. Our regular waitress, Tosha, and provided her usual efficient was back with us tonight service.

## Opening

President Vastell Williams called on Rev. Jim Berry to bring the opening prayer, and he led us in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Our guests were:

- **David Myers**, Richie's dad was with us again. He'll be leaving for New York in the coming week.
- **David & Denise Swaine**, parents of Elizabeth Swain who was part of tonight's program
- **Marlene Renz**, Wife of Treasurer Al Renz

## Optimist Family News

Alberto and Duarte was back from his trip to Colombia, and reported he had no difficulty in crossing the border into the U. S.

Sidney Sandridge was admitted to the hospital on Tuesday. Jim Roe said he was running a high fever and had some swelling. Jim had not heard if a diagnosis had been made or when Sidney might be released to go home.

**Club meets**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Thursday**  
**At 6:00 p.m. at Blue**  
**Plate Café**

**3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays**  
**At 11:45 a.m.**  
**Optimist Recreational**  
**Center**

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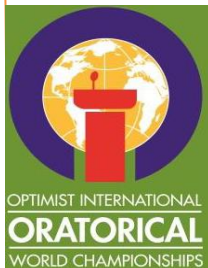
**Announcements & Committee Reports**



Tom Casteel announced that **next year's officers will be voted in at this month's Business Meeting** (in two weeks). A slate of nominees is being put together. He said as of today, there are still 3 slots open: First Vice President, Second Vice President, and one Board Member. Please consider placing your name in one of these vacant slots. The Club needs these offices filled, so don't be bashful about volunteering to be one of them.



Al Renz, chairman of the **Personal Growth and Involvement** Committee announced that Alfred Adams had met the requirements for his Level 7 PGI award. Al presented Alfred with a framed certificate and PGI lapel pin. There are only two other Optimists in our Club with a higher PGI level, Tom Casteel and Al Renz.



Al Renz announced that the **Regional Oratorical Contest** will be held **this Saturday** at Athens State University in McCandless Hall. The time is 10:00 a. m., and Optimists are encouraged to attend to root on the young lady who won our contest. She will be competing against 4 other young ladies for the right to compete at the District Contest to be held in Hoover, Alabama later this month.



President Vastell Williams asked everyone who planned to attend the **Respect for Law banquet** to sign up and indicate how many guests they will bring. He passed a sign-up sheet around at the meeting, and it will be available at the business meeting later this month. The banquet will be held at Trinity Methodist Church on Airport Road on **Monday, May 8.**

## Program #1

Eureka Battie introduced tonight's speaker, Mr. Chris Scribner, Executive Director of Cap & Gown. Mr. Scribner graduated from Georgetown University in Washington, D. C., and was a Congressional Aide before joining Teach for America. Teach for America assigned him to Huntsville 4 years ago, where he became a Social Studies teacher and Wrestling Coach for Johnson High School and now the same at Jemison HS.



Mr. Scribner related how shocked and disappointed he was to find out, after arriving, that only 10 % of Johnson High seniors were to enter a two-year or 4-year college upon graduation. The next year's tally was even worse, only 8 out of 100 seniors had college or university plans. He decided to do something about it. His idea was to expose Johnson High students to what colleges and universities had to offer. He took "a handful" of students to Nashville to visit Vanderbilt and Fisk Universities there. Upon returning to Huntsville, these students could not stop talking about their experience. Another such trip to Atlanta produced a similar result. The following year there were 30 college tours taken by students, including 9<sup>th</sup> graders. These tours formed the beginning of the Cap & Gown Program.

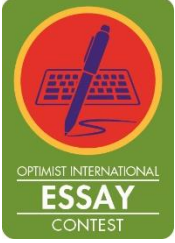
The Cap & Gown program was instrumental in raising the percentage of students at Johnson High going on to a higher education. The 10% entering college was raised to 50 % after two years and 65% in the third year. Mr. Scribner says that percentage will be even higher this year, the first year at Jemison High School. The program now has achieved their 501(c)3 status with the IRS and has hired a permanent Executive Director. Mr. Scribner says his goal has been for kids to realize their potential. He has also begun a summer SAT and STEM program to help students prepare for their university classes.

In answer to a question, Mr. Scribner said he would be associated with Cap & Gown as a volunteer until he leaves for Law School in the coming year. He said his commitment to Teach for America was only for 2 years, and he has put off his entrance into Law School for an additional 2 years to get Cap & Gown up and running.

In closing, Mr. Scribner introduced Alexis Battie, one of the students now in the Cap & Gown program (and daughter of Eureka Battie, by the way). Alexis is a Junior at Jemison High School. She related how much Cap & Gown has been to her, and how much she enjoyed going to "actual colleges" on Spring Break.

To learn more, check out Cap & Gown's web site, [www.capandgownproject.org](http://www.capandgownproject.org).

## Program #2



Alfred Adams pinch hit for Essay Contest Chairman George McDonough to introduce Elizabeth Swaine, the third-place winner of the Club's most recent Essay Contest. Elizabeth read her award-winning essay, and showed oratorical skills doing while doing it. She was awarded a framed certificate and a check for \$100. Needless to say, she was encouraged to enter the Club's Oratorical Contest next year.

## Closing

Vastell gave our two speakers a tile with the Optimist Creed. He also asked Alexis Battie to draw for our attendance prize. Alberto Duarte won the pot on the first drawing.

Vastell led the Club in reciting the Optimist Creed to close the meeting.

*Clyde Nevins*

## Optimistic Quote of the Week

**The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.**

*~B. B. King*

## CALENDAR

- 4/20 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center  
**Business Meeting - Food - (Eureka Battie)**
- 4/27 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center  
**TBD - Eureka Battie -**
- 5/2 Tuesday 4:00 pm 1st Commercial Bank - Whitesburg Dr.  
**Board Meeting**
- 5/8 Monday 6:00 pm Trinity Methodist Church  
**Respect for Law Banquet**

# Photos



**Al Renz Presents Al Adams His Level 7 PGI Certificate**



**Alexis Battie (Left) and Our Speaker Chris Scribner (Right)**



**Al Adams Presents Elizabeth Swain Her Third Place  
Essay Certificate and a \$100 Check**



**David & Denise Swaine, Parents of Elizabeth Swain**

## 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:**