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Opti - Topics

July Evening Meeting



Fourteen Optimists assembled at the Blue Plate Café this evening. For some reason, we were bumped from our regular meeting room so the Huntsville

South Club could have our usual meeting area. We were told it was because “they had a presenter.” It was good to see Jim Pepper and Ginger Casteel, spouses of Gay and Tom, respectively. Also, we enjoyed the presence of the Club’s two MDs, Dr’s. Hyder and Savage-Edwards who can’t make the noon meetings.

Opening

President Vastell Williams called on Rev. Jim Berry to bring the opening prayer, and Jim also led us in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Optimist Family News

Alberto Duarte reported that he had talked with **Fabiani** who is undergoing basic training prior to assuming his duties as JAG Officer in the USAF. Fabiani reports he is getting up at 4:30 a. m., marching everywhere, and learning important stuff like how to tie his shoes and fold his clothes. He was elected (or appointed?) Public Affairs Officer for his class.

Dr. Bill Clarke is in Oregon visiting his daughter—he’s been there a month already, according to Matt, and is enjoying himself immensely.

Club meets
1st Thursday
At 6:00 p.m. at Blue
Plate Café

3rd & 4th Thursdays
At 11:45 a.m.
Optimist Recreational
Center

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Announcements



Zone Vice President Alfred Adams announced he is starting his second round of his visits to the Optimist Clubs in our Zone. He will be attending the Noon Optimist Club's meeting at the Huntsville Country Club next week. He'd like three members of our Club to go with him so we would get A & A points for a Club Visit. Call or e-mail Al if you can go with him.

Program



Our speaker this evening was Richard Reynolds, Director and Principal of the Huntsville Achievement School. The school was started about 60 years ago by the First Baptist Church to provide education for children who don't fit into a "one size fits all" educational environment. It provides a safe and economical educational alternative for students with learning difficulties caused by Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia and Asperger's Syndrome. The school is primarily for middle-class families who can afford to pay the tuition at a private school. It is the only school of its kind between Nashville and Birmingham.

Mr. Reynolds has been associated with the school for 9 years. He spoke at our Club a year or so ago, at which time he told us the HAS would have to vacate its facility at 406 ½ Governors Drive due to the up-scale real estate development in that area. Tonight, he reported that the HAS is now located in the west wing of the former Westlawn Middle School in West Huntsville. They have been working diligently since Memorial Day to spruce up their new location which has five times the floor area of their old location.

He described the transformation, both of the interior and the exterior of the school's new location. The exterior now has a lawn, a new sidewalk and flowering rose bushes to provide a welcoming vista. They have also painted the interior to paint over the brown "prison colors" with soothing shades of gray and white. Lights fixtures now have all three fluorescent bulbs burning. Some of this work has been done by parents in partial payment of tuition of their children at the school.

There are four grades at the school: Young Elementary, Older Elementary, Middle School and High School. Last year there were 54 kids; next year they hope to have 75. There is one teacher per class; sharp, dedicated people who work for low pay and no benefits, but have a vision and a passion for their students.

Mr. Reynolds answered a few questions yielding the following information:

- Tuition at the school is \$605/month for middle school and elementary school and \$705/month for high school
- The HAS gets no funding from either the State or Huntsville City Schools. They do get support from individuals and organizations like our Club.
- Few of the students who attend HAS ever return to Public Schools; this is primarily due to the intimidating environment at most schools with bullying and hazing.
- He is able to keep up with some of the graduates of HAS, and has known some attend to universities and some to become tax-paying parents with good jobs.
- Statistics say Huntsville is one of the top 3 areas in the Country for the prevalence of Autism, perhaps exceeded only by the Raleigh/Durham Research Triangle in North Carolina.

Closing



Vastell gave our speaker a tile with the Optimist Creed, and asked him to draw for our attendance prize. Dr. Belinda Savage-Edwards was the winner on the first draw. She donated all her winnings to the Club's Childhood Cancer Fund.

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

Clyde Nevins

Optimistic Quote of the Week

“Everyone has a mountain to climb and autism has not been my mountain, it has been my opportunity for victory.”

~ Rachel Barcellona

CALENDAR

7/11 Tuesday 4:00 pm 1st Commercial Bank – Whitesburg Dr.

Board Meeting

7/20 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center

Business Meeting - Food – (Charlene Higgins)

7/27 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center

TBD- Charlene Higgins

8/3 Thursday 6:00 pm Blue Plate Cafe

TBD – Tom Casteel



PHOTOS



Our Speaker Richard Reynolds



Website: hsvoptimists.org

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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PLACE
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TO: