

HIGHLIGHTS

Newsletter of the Sunrise Optimist Club

Once again, your newsletter editor has gotten behind schedule, and this is being typed quite some time after the November 13th meeting which it covers

Birthdays this week were a little confusing: at least when trying to make sense of the editor's notes more than a week after the fact. The names Dave Jackson, Dan Lill, and Steve Scheffelbein were listed, but it isn't clear which of the three was present, and it is believed that one of them was actually a birthday left over from the previous week. Your editor recorded that we did sing this week, but he didn't note how good or bad it was.

The meeting of the Sunrise Board of Directors that was to have taken place on the evening of the 13th was postponed until the 20th.

President Rocky mentioned the celebration that had taken place at the Great Overland Station on the previous weekend. He had very good things to say about both the memorial plaza out in front of the station that is dedicated to veterans the station itself.

Though it has already taken place by the time you read this, the Sunrise Optimist Pancake Feed was looming at the time these notes were being taken. At that time, Frank Law indicated he still needed lots of help. Your editor was ther for the "second shift". From his perspective the whole thing seems to have gone very well.

Though it has already started by the time you read this, Lloyd Becker spoke briefly about the Christmas tree lot fundraiser. The trees were expected to be delivered the day before Thanksgiving. Help would be needed to set up the tree lot ahead of time and to unload the trees.

Rocky read a thank-you note from the Washburn University baseball coach. He expressed appreciation for the use of our field while theirs was undergoing renovation.

This meeting (November 13th) was the first after the Veterans Day holiday. All veterans were asked to come forward and be recognized and thanked. It was impressive to see how many of those in our club are veterans.

Each veteran was presented with a flag lapel pin. Rocky reminded us that we not only need to thank veterans, but also thank their families because they have to make sacrifices as well.

The program next week (Nov 20) will be provided by state representative and KS Nat'l Guard Lt Co Lee Tafanelli.

This week, KS Nat'l Guard Lt Col Roger Aeschliman presented a slide show on his experience in Iraq. This report will be kind of dry compared to the wonderful, colorful slide show.

Roger is a Grantville native who has been with CoreFirst Bank & Trust for 5 years and with the State of Kansas for thirteen years before that. About a year ago he returned from a one-year tour of duty in Iraq. The 2nd Infantry Battalion of the KS Nat'l Guard was notified in March of 2005 that they would be deployed. Initial training was at Ft. Sill, OK and desert training was at Ft Irwin, CA (where they live in tents).

His command was responsible for operating a conference center, a mess hall, taking care of dignitaries, and organizing convoys. Roger met many famous people (congressmen, entertainers, and foreign heads of state). It wasn't all fun and games. It was, in fact, often quite dangerous work to protect convoys and dignitaries. His command included around 500 soldiers. During their tour, one was killed in action, 12 wounded, and approx 25 returned due to illness.

He indicated that the media isn't presenting the full story, and that a lot of GOOD things are occurring in terms of rebuilding the infrastructure of Iraq and rebuilding the economy, government, etc. The violence and death we see on the news is real, and he won't deny that it is happening, but it makes up about 1% of everything that is going on. We aren't seeing the good side.

Having lived under a dictatorship, the Iraqis never had basic government services we take for granted.

For example, they have millions of veterans, many wonded, plus widows & children, just from the war fought against Iran in the 1980's.

However, they never had a veterans' affairs department to coordinate services they needed. This is just one of the things we are helping them to develop. Also, electrical distribution systems, communications systems, schools, water supplies, and transportation systems are being built at an amazing rate.

SUNRISE OPTIMIST

NORTH TOPEKA
Meetings: Every
Tuesday 6:45 AM
720 NW 50th St, Topeka