

HIGHLIGHTS

Newsletter of the Sunrise Optimist Club

President Rocky called the meeting to order and he also led the flag salute after an Invocation provided by Pastor Richard Sundermeyer. In addition to the featured speaker, two guests were present, Richard Keller and Rodney Obermeier. If your editor heard correctly, Richard is affiliated with Mother Theresa church (but he did not get to speak with him afterwards to verify this). Rodney is our Optimist Lt Governor.

Rocky read a thank you note the club received from Breakthrough House. There was also a notice from Midland Hospice about a fundraising event to take place on Nov 7th. That will have occurred by the time you read this.

Sharlene Showalter announced a fundraising event to be held in our building (which may or may not have occurred by the time you read this. It is a chili feed and silent auction to help with the medical expense incurred by Morgan Simpson, a 14 year old student at Logan who is suffering from non-Hodgkins Lymphoma.

Lloyd Becker was eager to let everyone know that not all of the Christmas Tree work slots are taken yet. Sign up now to get your choice before the good ones are gone. A sign-up sheet was sent around at the meeting.

Frank Law wants everyone to know we need a lot of help for the Pancake Feed on the morning of 17th of this month. A sign-up sheet went around but he wants those people who weren't necessarily at the meeting to have the chance to help also. He is asking for two shifts of volunteers. Your editor wrote down the exact beginning and ending times but would like to confirm those with Frank before they are printed in the newsletter. It is the morning of the 17th.

Gary Domer said the fish fry was great fun & we are already looking at dates for an event next year. It will have to be scheduled well in advance because we are already taking reservations for use of the building for a year in advance and beyond. In fact, many of the weekends next fall are already scheduled. It was suggested that our fish fry event might be scheduled to coincide with a home football game.

1020 tickets for the Gator raffle were sold. This was less than the maximum we said we would sell, but it was still a good fundraiser for the club.

Ben Brower introduced or featured speaker today, Frank Bentemen.

Mr. Bentemen is a Goodyear retiree. He is originally from Frankfort, which is roughly 50 miles northwest of Topeka. Frankfort lost proportionally more soldiers to World War II than any other U.S. town. He was instrumental in getting proper recognition for the sacrifice made by these soldiers, their families, and the community.

This project started years ago when Frank was looking through a box of his mother's possessions that included copies of local newspapers announcing the war's end. At the time Frankfort had a population of roughly 1,800.

One of the papers listed the hundreds out of that relatively small population who served in WW II. It also identified 32 who were known to have been killed. That is more than any other town of similar size. Much later in the project, it was discovered that six more had actually died also bringing the total to an unbelievable 38.

By contrast, Bedford, MA has a federal memorial dedicated to the sacrifice by that town because they lost 22 in the Normandy invasion and battles immediately thereafter. Frankfort's casualties were 50% higher (but were spread over the course of the war).

Frank worked with staff on the office of Senator Roberts and has met with the Senator several times. Steve Fry of The Topeka Capital-Journal called and arranged to do a front page story. Sen. Roberts read a resolution honoring the Frankfort Boys on the floor of the U.S. Senate on November 16th, 2006.

Many people have read about his work to recognize the Frankfort Boys and they often give him their own documents related to WW II. This includes a letter written by Sen Arthur Capper to the family of one of the deceased soldiers.

Frank is a veteran himself, who sailed out of New York past the Statue of Liberty and through the Straights of Gibraltar. He crossed the Rhine River on March 24th, 1945 and was then wounded. He continued to serve in the army for several years after the war. He has been back to Germany several times since then, and has visited a cemetery where many of his former comrades are buried.



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