

CLUB ACTIVITIES

Ivan Stafford has the programs for March. Programs for February are by Tom Wissert.

You already know the secret program for February 3rd. Tom was afraid to announce in advance that our own Bill Gullett was going to talk to us about the Florence City Schools Foundation, for fear more of us would be absent.

John Lehrter, from the airport, is scheduled for the second Friday, Tony Brink, current president of the Shoals Area Homebuilders Association will speak on the 17th, and Mike Lane will bring us a report on UNA baseball on the fourth Friday.

Sally organized an interclub with North Florence this week, which was attended by Don R., Neville S., Andy B., Julie M., and David B.

Probably everyone noticed the dues went up by \$4 a month. The board of directors voted to make it official after the general membership discussed it and a show of hands at the meeting on January 6, 2006 showed overwhelming support to pay the increase in order to stay at the conference center.

RECENT PROGRAMS

Dr. Randy Pettus made a drug presentation on January 6, 2006. Randy has been with the school system 28 years and is now the Federal Programs Director, which includes anti-drug duties under Title IV.

He shared very disturbing results of surveys done in the Florence city schools which indicate beginning use of tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana at younger ages than just five years ago, with first use at age 9 for some current sixth graders. This suggests we need to start drug education at an earlier point than many of us may have assumed.

No great surprise was the evidence that kids with good grades and involved in extracurricular activities are not the students most likely to be using illegal substances.

Carl Bailey, CEO at Coffee Health Group gave us a report on the state of affairs at ECM and Shoals

hospitals. He reported a profit the last two years after several years of operating at a loss. He also reported greater patient satisfaction, which he said is the key to financial profitability. Responding to patient complaints, involving families, and addressing spiritual needs are steps they have taken to reach the goal of greater patient satisfaction.

ECM has one of the five busiest emergency rooms in Alabama. Eight per cent of inpatients have no insurance or ability to pay, while twenty per cent of outpatients are uninsured and impoverished, but no one who needs treatment is turned away, according to Carl.

Tommy Pirkle, head of the Foundation for Mental Health in the Shoals (formerly Riverbend Foundation), gave a report on January 27 about activities of the foundation. The foundation sponsors an annual conference on the theme "The Brain and Behavior," with registration fees set at a point only intended to cover costs. Other educational efforts include a major effort now being undertaken to train law enforcement officers about dealing with the mentally ill they encounter. The need for this training became painfully apparent after the death last year of a mentally ill man at the hands of a Lauderdale County sheriff's deputy.

Tommy also has plans for what he calls "impact funds," which will take the foundation in a new direction, finding individuals who are not reaching their potential and intervening in their lives to help them reach a better future, targeting those with psychiatric or drug related problems.

Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.