



**Club Officers for 2008-2009**

President	Dick Baber	322-8074
V. Pres., Pres. Elect	Gary Guttau	487-3248
Secretary	Dale Willenborg	366-6815
Treasurer	Jeff Jorgensen	487-3355
Past President	Dale Willenborg	366-6815

**Board Members**

<b>2007-2009</b>	<b>2008-2010</b>
John Klein	Judy Guttau
Bob Hibbard	John Schmitt
Denny White	

February 7, 2009

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**Report of Recent Club Meeting**

President Richard Baber opened the Optimist Club meeting on February and Gary Guttau gave the opening prayer. There were 15 members and 13 visitors in attendance. The Silver Keg Feeders 4-H club provided breakfast for everyone. Kirk Vorthmann won the 50-50 drawing. Jeff Nelson won the attendance award but did not collect.

Dick Baber, Keith Denton, and Dale Willenborg provided jokes for the meeting. Gary Funkhouser contributed to the Youth Fund for his 71<sup>st</sup> birthday this Friday. Dick Baber contributed because he will be a grandfather soon. Gary Funkhouser, Richard Vorthmann, and Bill Vorthmann assisted with the Jazz Choir contest last Monday.

The Club is planning a dinner on February 28 at the Rose at 7:00 p.m. The next Zone meeting will be February 16 at 6:30 p.m.

**Iraq Political Districts**

Rick Burns from Elk Horn was the speaker on February 7. Rick is a Lieutenant Colonel in the 418 Civil Affairs Battalion of the Army. He has been on two tours of duty in Iraq, one North of Baghdad and one to the Southeast part of Baghdad. He returned home in November 2008 from working in the Karadah Political District. He was accompanied by his son Daniel Burns, a Junior at Elk Horn, Kimballton High School.

Rick worked with the people in the Karadah district on a variety of infrastructure, education, governance, and economic development projects. He was the Brigade's liaison with the district council. The council was composed of educated people who met weekly. They are mainly Shia, but the council also included two Christians and one Sunni.

In the district they have the Karadah Beladiya, similar to a Public Works Department. However, the district council has no budget for Public Works. All expenses must be approved by the centralized Baghdad public works department, whose head is appointed by the Prime Minister. Therefore, it is difficult to get money when it is needed.

Factories are just learning to operate without a centrally controlled Government. Therefore, they have no sales force, only manufacturing what is

ordered. Even though the country produces a lot of oil, they import petroleum products for plastics from Saudi Arabia.

Since Iraq was under sanctions before the war, their technology, infrastructure, and ideas are 30-50 years old. The people have had little exposure to modern ideas. Therefore, Rick Burns is working to set up a Sister City relationship between Council Bluffs and his district. The people there need information exchanges and he is working to bring 10-20 Iraqis to Council Bluffs and Omaha this summer to show them how factories, government departments, and businesses operate in this country. The four areas of emphasis will be Public Works, Governance, Higher Education, and Economic Development.

The Iraqis are very hard working and determined. The two things they need are economic stability and peace.

Rick can be contacted at [bcg@metc.net](mailto:bcg@metc.net) or [rick.burns@us.army.mil](mailto:rick.burns@us.army.mil)

**CALENDAR**

The February Can Kennel contributions will be for the Treynor IT Club. Total collections are \$67,140 through October 2008.

- Feb 11, 3:30 p.m. – Can sorting
- Feb 25, 3:30 p.m. – Can sorting

**Birthdays**

- Feb 1 - DICK BABER (recognized)
- Feb 5 - LARRY KRAMER (recognized)
- Feb 12 - RICHARD VORTHMANN
- Feb 13 - GARY FUNKHOUSER (recognized)

**Anniversaries**

- Feb 6 - JON JACOBSEN
- Feb 23 - RICHARD VORTHMANN

**Speakers**

- Feb 14 – To be announced

**Programs**

- February – Gary Guttau
- March – Chad Guttau
- April – Dale Willenborg
- May – Richard Vorthmann

PS: The Chicago Bears took the field for their first Super Bowl practice in Miami. Not long after the practice started a Bear offensive player noticed a white, powdery substance on the field. Practice was immediately stopped and experts were called in to examine the substance. With recent scares about anthrax, officials worried that terrorists had somehow gained access to the field. A group of nervous Chicago players stood and watched as the substance was examined. Finally the tests were completed and the experts revealed that the powder was just the chalk dust from the goal line. It was an understandable mistake considering the Bears' offense seldom got near that area of the field.