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Kiwanis comes to Winston County

History made in new civic organization's establishment

By **Joseph M. Orellano**
Staff Writer

LAKESHORE – The charter night of Winston County's newest civic organization was a landmark event in several respects. Firstly, it marks the first time a Kiwanis Club has been chartered in Winston County, and secondly, it came to be thanks to the sponsorship of the Winston County High School Key Club.



Kiwanis International president Paul Palazzolo was proud to welcome the Winston County Kiwanians into the ranks of their global service organization.

Club.

Typically, Key Clubs are created upon sponsorship from a Kiwanis Club. This is what spurred the Key Club and its organizers to attempt what has never before been done.

Kiwanis got its start in 1915 in Detroit, but its convention was held in Birmingham in 1917, where the organization got its real legs. Worldwide today, there are roughly 600,000 Kiwanians in 8,000 clubs. The name, "Kiwanis" means "we shout" or "we gather," and was coined from an American Indian expression. This was the original motto of Kiwanis, translated as "We build."

"Today, the Kiwanis motto is 'serving the children of the world.' The greatest gift is the gratification in knowing we're contributing our help, time and efforts to people in the community who need us. That's why we feel so good when it comes to helping children, especially," said Bob Palys, master of ceremonies for the club's charter banquet.

"I wonder if those two men in Detroit had any idea there was a Double Springs. Just think - 20 years from now at the impact this club will have on Winston County and that 33 charter members and future members will do for this community."

The guests for the evening banquet, hosted at the Lakeshore Inn restaurant, included members of the sponsoring Key Club, and the co-sponsoring Kiwanis Clubs from Cullman and Jasper. The Alabama District Governor, George Aiken, was in attendance, as well as President of Kiwanis International, Paul G. Palazzolo.

Winston County Key Club secretary/treasurer Lucas Posey led the invocation for the meeting, then co-president Jessica Bloom led the Pledge of Allegiance. Vice-president Hannah Jacobs sang "America, the Beautiful" before Palazzolo addressed the group.

"To our new Kiwanians, I want to say on the behalf of some 600,000 Kiwanis family members around the world, thanks for saying yes when you were asked to join. We must also thank the members of the Key Club. They were presented the challenge to be the first in history where a Key Club would sponsor, build and nurture a brand new Kiwanis Club.

"Normally, this process is reversed. Normally, a Kiwanis Club builds a key club at a local high school. This has happened in reverse, and there's nothing wrong with this," Palazzolo said. "This should be a trend around the world. We should hold up the Winston County Kiwanis and Key Club as examples for what we should do around the world. Kiwanis has been around for 96 years, and this is the first time this has happened. We are going to promote this, show it to the world, and people are going to see this at the international convention for Kiwanis and Key Clubs!"

Patches were presented to the members of the sponsoring clubs for their efforts in building the Winston County Club. A plaque was presented to Frances Gillentine, president-elect of the Winston County Kiwanis Club, for her instrumental efforts in the formation of the club, as well, and plaques were given to the Key Club co-presidents, Bloom and Alex Myric, whose grandmother accepted upon his behalf.



The members of the Winston County Kiwanis Club display their new banner shortly after officially becoming a chartered club. Help from the Winston County High School Key Club was instrumental in the formation of the new Kiwanis Club.

Palazzolo noted that every new club president is important, as they are the pioneer in helping the club be everything it can be during its first year. He then presented the Winston County Kiwanis Club president, Greg Batchelor, with the club's flag, banner, as well as a free registration to the next Kiwanis International convention, slated to be held in Geneva, Switzerland.

Palazzolo then instructed Batchelor assist him in introducing the newest members of the Kiwanis Family by presenting them with their certificates of membership and pins.

"It gives me great pleasure to do this. Four years ago we were in the same situation with the Key Club," Palazzolo said, noting that several people in the community and at Winston County High School were instrumental in the formation of the Key Club, mentioning Marla Wakefield and Jill Martinez, among others.

"Out of a student body of about 280 students, 98 were charter members of that Key Club, and they have introduced themselves to state and

international levels," Palazzolo said. "I am very proud to be here tonight to be able to call out the names of the new inductees of the Winston County Kiwanis Club. Welcome aboard!"

Club officers include president, Greg Batchelor; presi-

dent elect, Angela Cowens; vice president, Pam Waid; secretary, Angela Brockway and treasurer, Rane Robinson. The board of directors include, three year appointees, Donna Batchelor, Sharon Cagle and David Jacobs. The two-year appointees are Mike Brockway and Wendy Daniel. Charter members of the club are Robin Baldwin, Debra Barnett, Donna Batchelor, Greg Batchelor, Angela Brockway, Mike Brockway, Sharon Cagle,

Steve Cagle, Angela Cowens, Robert Cowens, Wendy Daniel, Frances Gillentine, Larry Gillentine, Glenda Hodge, Jo Hood, Wendell Hood, Casandra Horsley, David Jacobs, Genny Jacobs, Gina Knight, Fredieth Marcum, Jill Martinez, Linda Moody, Bob Palys, Marcia Posey, Gina Robinson, Rane Robinson, John D. Snoddy, Theresa Snoddy, Vonda Townsend, Pam Waid, Marla Wakefield and Sheila Wallace.

Palazzolo addressed the newly-inducted club body. "Each and every one of you new members, be proud of what you've done tonight, and what you'll do in the future. Always keep in your mind and always remember: one child, one day at a time."

Alabama District Governor George Aiken, then presented the club with a donation of \$500 to help give them a leg-up from the get-go.

"This has been a wild ride for me," Aiken said. "Winston County didn't have even the slightest thought of a Kiwanis

Club when they were having their Key Club conventions. Now, six weeks later, we have a Kiwanis Club, all with the good efforts of these young people with the Key Club here.

"I have never felt as much electricity with any group of Kiwanians than here. I challenge you - keep this electricity crackin'!"

Palazzolo then shared five key points with the new members that a successful Kiwanis Club does, including providing a relevant service, have fun and fellowship together - because it isn't all work and no play, obtain some notoriety, keep the connection with the sponsoring clubs alive and included in your service work and continue to develop leadership skills.

"Make sure in 25 years that many of us can gather again to celebrate the first quarter-century of success in Winston County. We hope our Key Club members are still here and are then Kiwanians, themselves," he said. "It took 95 years to get a Kiwanis Club built in Winston County. Let's not keep it that far away. Let's not make it another 95 years before our next gathering," he chuckled.

After the benediction from David Jacobs, president Greg Batchelor adjourned the first meeting of the Winston County Kiwanis Club.

The club holds its regular meetings on the first and third Thursday evenings of each month at 7 p.m. at First National Bank in Double Springs.



ACCEPTING THE GAVEL
 At left, Greg Batchelor, president of the newly chartered Winston County Kiwanis Club, accepts his presidential gavel from Kiwanis International President, Paul Palazzolo during ceremonies held recently.

PHOTO BY JOSEPH M. ORELLANO