

Coach Shares His Basketball Strategy



Coach Patrick Dotson

Coach Patrick Dotson told us last week some of his strategy for the MHS Basketball Team. And judging from the first game, it works.

The first five Buff games are at home, "and we want to win all our home games," Dotson said.

Then winning half of the Buffalo schedule on the road was targeted as goal number two.

If the McAlester team does that, it can be among the top eight seeds as the regionals come up, and get to the finals. Winning the first round of the finals will put the McAlester team in a position to do its best in state competition.

In a different category, Coach Dotson listed the team "game goals or objectives."

First, the Buffaloes want to score more than 60 points. McAlester has a "very capable offense," he observed.

Next, they need to get half of their offensive points in the lane. Reducing turnovers was pointed out by a cartoon Dotson's wife gave him. In it, the coach says just before the game, (to his team in red shirts,) "Oh, yes, just pass the ball to the guys in red shirts."

Successful free throws were 41 percent last year, and the team goal is 70 percent, the coach said. "If a team can shoot 75 percent it can win most games," he added.

Each member of the Buffalo team is to shoot 100 free throws during practice. If they can end a practice session with 10 good freethrows in a row, "they get to go home," the coach said.

The local team also "likes to out-rebound our opponents," Dotson stated.

He said he is pleased with the Buff "man-to-man defense," and said they must have "a hand in his (opponent's) face" when he shoots.

He introduced players Corey Alklar, Grant Zellmere, Matt Collier, team captain, and Yoshi Takada from Japan.

Dotson said he and Yoshi "use hand signals" because Dotson "has no idea what he is saying."

The Brumley Tournament "is a great day of basketball," he noted.

Sand Springs is their second tournament. And a Christmas Tournament will be held in Arkansas.

Dotson also introduced his assistant, Chris Zike. The coach said he and his wife, Mary Ellen, have three daughters, two of which are in the McAlester School System.

He invited Rotary members to attend the local ballgames.

Dave Cressman Brings Us A Thanksgiving Message



Dave Cressman

Rotarian Dave Cressman, pastor of the Grand Avenue Methodist Church, did a lot of research to bring us an annual Thanksgiving program, Nov.22.

Dave said he read every presidential Thanksgiving proclamation, and he found that two presidents "might not have the facts of the first Thanksgiving entirely right."

The first national Christian Thanksgiving was proclaimed by Abraham Lincoln, on Oct. 9, 1863.

Days of thanksgiving had been proclaimed during the War of Independence by George Washington, and by the mid-1800s, many states observed a Thanksgiving holiday.

Then Sara J. Hale, (who wrote "Mary Had A Little Lamb,") put the women into the matter. She was editor of a women's magazine, and she wrote and lobbied for the special holiday until Lincoln took action.

Dave called President Lincoln "the epitome of humility."

Leaders on both sides of the Civil War believed that they were right and that God was on their side. An article in the Atlantic Monthly said about Lincoln, that his humility "came from a sense that whatever ship carried him on life's rough waters, he was not the captain but merely a subject of the divine force...."

President Gerald Ford was a Christian, but was the only president who made no reference to God, in his 1975 proclamation. But with President Jimmy Carter and each successive president, God was proclaimed as the source of our blessings.

When President Ronald Reagan issued his first Thanksgiving Proclamation, his opening words were: "Since the Pilgrims observed the initial Thanksgiving holiday in 1621..."

The next year he noted that the Native Americans had the first thanksgiving celebrations. But he referred to "the first Pilgrim observance in 1621."

The next year, his proclamation pointed out "a band of settlers arriving in Maine in 1607 held a service of thanks for their safe journey, and that 12 years later settlers in Virginia set aside a day of thanksgiving for their survival.

See A Thanksgiving Message on page 2

State Transportation Chiefs Tell About The Heartland Flyer



Joe Kyle, manager of the State Rail Programs Division, ODOT

Manager Joe Kyle and his assistant division manager told us Nov. 15 about the Rail Programs Division efforts to promote and operate the Heartland Flyer rail service between Oklahoma City and Fort Worth.

The Heartland Flyer is Amtrak's service in Oklahoma and the Rails Division is part of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

Assistant Division Manager John E. Dougherty accompanied Kyle to McAlester, and both told us the importance of the railroad stretch south from Oklahoma City, through the Arbuckle Mountains.

Kyle said the state was without rail passenger service for 20 years, until 1999, when Amtrak came to Oklahoma.

He reported that more than 317,000 persons have used the service since then, and 40 percent are coming to Oklahoma from outside the state. This boosts Oklahoma tourism and connects the state to the Texas Eagle in Fort Worth, and more than 500 cities in 46 states served by Amtrak.

Dougherty said that "people from everywhere come to ride this

A Thanksgiving Message from page 1

Then, the proclamation said that in 1621, Governor William Bradford "created the most famous of all such observances, at Plymouth Colony.."

However, he added mention that "the Spaniards in California and the Dutch in New Amsterdam also held services to give public thanks to God."

Lincoln was not a popular president at the time, because of the Civil War and his Emancipation Proclamation, ending slavery. But Cressman said no president, in a Thanksgiving proclamation, will ever refer to repentance or sin, or to God's action towards us, with the boldness of Lincoln."

The speaker closed his program with a prayer giving thanks to God, as the "source of all good things."

District 6110 Dates

- February 16-23, 2006 . International Assembly, San Diego, California, USA
- March 6, 2006RYLA Applications Due
- March 17-18, 2006Presidents-Elect Training Seminar (P.E.T.S.), Peabody Hotel, Little Rock, AR
- March 30-April 2, 2006 The 16th annual RYLA camp

train." Other countries are familiar with the train service, he added.

Some groups take young people who have never been on a train. Some go to Gainesville to shop. And there are dozens of special events each year, from a Mardi Gras train to Halloween and Santa trips.

Volunteers act as tour guides to provide on-board educational programs about the history, geology and plant life of Oklahoma.

The train is smoke-free, but "smoke breaks" are provided.

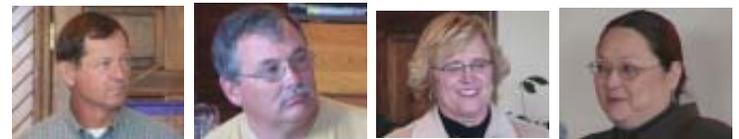
They called the trip "inexpensive, reliable, and an alternate means of transportation to the 90,123 Oklahomans over 65 who don't drive."

They invited us to travel on the Heartland Flyer.



Assistant Division Manager John Dougherty, State Department of Transportation

Club Has Four New Members



John Tucker Brent Yates Mary Shannon Susan Monroe

We have new club members almost every month, which is a sign of a healthy club. Our newest members come from the new city manager to the newspaper publisher, to the city schools and Brent Yates, owner of Yates Pest Control. Brent has lived in McAlester all his life. He and his wife, Kellie, took over the business from his father this year.

Susan Monroe is the brave young woman who took on the city manager's post. She was born in Tokyo, and has her Master's of Public Administration. She has been on several club programs already and had one of her own.

John Tucker is the newspaper official. He was a member of Rotary at Shawnee, and was very active in civic affairs there.

Mary Shannon is in charge of the curriculum and federal programs at the high school, and has been with the school system for years. And Lucy says she was a real valedictorian of her class. (And you believe Lucy don't you?)

Attendance Visitors, and Handshakers

We had 67 in attendance last week, and no visitors.

On Nov. 22, there were 44 attending and two visitors. Michelle Bruffett was a guest of Shayne Javersak, and Bill Pothier of Gainesville, Tx. was a guest of Brian Renegar.

On Nov. 15, there were 54 Rotarians and one guest, Frances Lerblance, guest of Richard.

HANDSHAKERS-Banker Greg McNall was the handshaker on Nov. 15, then won a commemorative coin on Nov. 22. The Mayor gave it to Greg, and Carl Filskow stepped in for the little (old) people, to take one of the coins.

Last week, Mike Lowber gave it to the Jim Northcutt Educational Fund.