

MINUTES OF THE OKALOOSA COUNTY LEAGUE OF CITIES QUARTERLY FALL DINNER MEETING THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2001

CALL TO ORDER

Following the 6 p.m. social hour at the Eglin Air Force Base Officer's Club, Mayor John Thomas called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

INVOCATION

The Reverend Ernest Walker gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor John B. Arnold led the Pledge of Allegiance.

WELCOME

Mayor Arnold from the host city of Valparaiso extended a warm welcome to everyone, thanking them for coming. He turned the meeting over to the President of the Okaloosa County League of Cities, Mayor John Thomas of Mary Esther, who introduced special guests Col. David Bird, Chairman of the Okaloosa County Commissioners Shirley Ransom and husband Lee; Reverend Ernest Walker and his wife, Pauline; Senator Charlie Clary and Aide, Allison Pursley; and Representative Jerry Melvin. The youngest elected official at each table introduced those seated.

DINNER

A delicious seafood buffet was enjoyed by all.

FEATURED SPEAKER

Representative Jerry Melvin was introduced as the keynote speaker for the evening, who asked for input from each city on issues they are currently facing, especially following the effects wrought on our nation following the September 11th terrorist attack. The State is facing serious economic impact, particularly related to the tourism industry, he added.

Mr. Melvin focused on a book about America's 30 years war, written by Villante Vagini, that details why America is so great. He said that America is so successful due to 1) America is a country of law based on spiritual foundation; 2) America is a country of private property; 3) individual rights are guaranteed by the Constitution (no *group* rights are guaranteed by the Constitution); and 4) America has a oneness. He elaborated on the decline of this briefly, addressing the "hyphenated Americans." Representative Melvin said he thought our schools should be teaching the Florida Statutes, Bill of Rights, Federalist Papers and other important documents.

Things are looking up, he concluded, saying that we had a great group in the Okaloosa League of Cities working for the interest of the municipalities in conjunction with the military bases and the County.

Rep. Melvin turned the floor back over to Mayor Thomas, who announced that in gratitude of Eglin AFB's excellent cooperation and participation in the Okaloosa League of Cities under Col. Bird's leadership, the League had agreed to confer the title of "Honorary Mayor" to Col. Bird, 96th Airbase Wing Commander, and presented him with a plaque so stating and a ball cap with the title embroidered on it. Col. Bird graciously and proudly accepted the award, and donned the cap.

The floor was then given back to Rep. Melvin, who was joined at the podium by Allison Pursley, to present FRDAP (Florida Development and Recreational Assistance Program) ceremonial checks to the following cities: Shalimar, Cinco Bayou, Mary Esther and Ft. Walton Beach.

Mayor Thomas then surprised Rep. Melvin by awarding him with a plaque, the first ever presented from the OLoC to a State level representative for doing an outstanding job in representing the needs of municipalities to the Legislature in Tallahassee.

DOOR PRIZES

The centerpiece, a festively decorated mug, was awarded to the person at each table who had the birthday closest to the day of the dinner.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Jelen Thomas
Approved 12-6-01

