

The Optimist Monthly

Friend of Youth

December 2019



December

12/03 - 12/19: Christmas tree lot! Please see Sandy Bushue's summary on page four and visit Appendix II for a collage of photos of the Christmas tree lot.

12/04: Our speaker was Katie Cristol, Arlington County Board Member. Katie, with Mark Zetlin, below, gave an informative summary of recent Arlington



policies, including continuing to cast a broad net for businesses to locate in Crystal City and not just rely on Amazon to fill the empty offices there.



Thank you, Mark Zetlin and Shandra Niswander, for inviting Katie. Also at the luncheon, Tricia O'Hara presented this year's Optimist grant to Opera-NOVA during the meeting (see photo, left).

12:11: The Annual Christmas Breakfast! For the eighth year in a row, Brian Kellenberger, managed the Christmas Breakfast. Brian submits the following **summary:** The breakfast went well. We had representatives from the local High Schools, locally elected officials including Clerk of the Court, Sheriff, Fire Chief and Judges. The entertainment was provided by Yorktown High School Chamber Singers. The guest speaker was Drew Hill, Pastor of Memorial Baptist Church and told stories about re-gifting and how the story of Christmas is re-gifted every year and how an amazing time of year this is. It was an uplifting message. The club was in all its festive splendor and the food was delicious. We honored Larry Gaydos for his 20 years of service to the club as Treasurer. It got everyone in the Christmas spirit. (Photos below provided by Peter Wehmann).



Jeff Englander and Master of Ceremonies Brian Kellenberger



Guest Speaker Pastor Drew Hill



Brian Kellenberger, Larry Gaydos, Conley Ricker, & Mark Zetlin at presentation of Appreciation award to Larry for his 20 years serving as our Club Treasurer.

UPCOMING EVENTS

January

1/08: Speaker TBA. Texas BBQ (2761 Washington Blvd) at 12:15.

1/22: Speaker TBA. WGCC at 12.15.

1/29 : Meet & Greet, Texas BBQ from 5:30 to 7:00.

CHRISTMAS LOT REPORT



by **Sandy Bushue:**

Optimists,

What a tree season!!!! We sold 2200 trees, 200 garland, 250 wreaths, and 250 WH ornaments and 48 medium tree stands in 17 days!! You should all feel exhausted!! Please take a look at pictures from the tree lot in Appendix II, below.

Our website was extremely busy this year. Greg Clough keeps it up-to-date and we had a lot of activity. We received over 30 calls and many emails. Thank you, Greg, for the tree lot page with good information.

Believe it or not, the five lonely trees left after December 16 finally found homes. The last tree was picked up by a family who just took it but called our website asking for an address to send a check.

The lot was "deconstructed" and packed away on Sunday, December 22. Under the direction of JB Whitlow and his crew of "Ninjas", the lot was taken down with great efficiency and the team was eating pizza on the empty lot by noon. The Ninja team included Optimists Steve Bouchard (with two employees), Jeff Englander with son James, and Brian Kellenberger. They were joined by five volunteers from Arlington Babe Ruth Baseball (Don Gay, Mike Lowery, Rob Pioster, Beth Jones, and JP Cooney).

A big thank you to all of you who worked hard to make the tree lot a success. I am looking forward to report the financial results which I hope to have by mid January.

Another big thank you to the Tree Lot Committee. We have been together for 10 years!!!! I am honored and humbled to work with such talented, bright and good people. The Committee works very hard and strives each year to do better. They are also very, very dedicated! It appears this year they succeeded in every way. Here they are:

Three Cheers to the weekly captains!!!! They really stepped up!!

Greg Clough - tough first week due to the lot being busy, busy! Great job on website.

Brian Kellenberger - tough second week! Greg and Brian got the biggest workout.

Andreas Baltatzis - Thank you for arranging security for the trees!

Bob Patton - For 2 years now, the lot has closed early not giving him a chance. But he brings great ideas and support to the Committee each year!

Volunteers - Barbara Nicastro

Barbara Nicastro out did herself this year! Knowing we would not have Optimists on the lot at all times, Barbara worked tirelessly to ensure that the lot was supported with terrific volunteers. Barbara, thank you!!!! You did an outstanding job. Best year ever for volunteer support!!!

Lot Managers - Dick McHugh and Frank O'Leary

Dick McHugh and Frank O'Leary made a intrepid pair. They divided and conquered the duties and the results speak for themselves. Frank O'Leary tracked and monitored every penny and entered over 500 credit card numbers when the cc machine was broken!!!

Unloading Trees and Miscellaneous - Three Cheers to Richard Knight

Three flawless unloading parties. That is truly a record!! Richard Knight coordinates the volunteers and provides the refreshments! Permits secured or applied for with Arlington County and insurance purchased and updated!! Thank you Richard!!

WH Ornaments - Diane Andrews

Diane Andrews is one of our newest members and volunteered to head of the our WH ornament sells. We sold out!!!!!! Thank you Diane. You did a great job!

Public Relations - Tricia O'Hara

Tricia O'Hara scheduled the No. VA Sun to come to an unloading party. We got a nice big article with a picture. We also purchased ads in the Arlington Chamber of Commerce newsletter.

Lot Engineer and Trouble Shooter - JB WHITLOW

JB Whitlow is the man!!! He leads putting up the lot and taking down the lot!! He keeps everything organized throughout the season. If something does not work or breaks or disappears, JB takes the initiative to fix it or find it! He orders the wreaths and works the lot. JB touches everything and that is why it all goes smoothly - quiet competence!! Thank you JB for your leadership, your dedication and your kindness.

JB also ensures that our beautiful "stars and stripes" flies high every year over the lot.

Thank you President Mark Zetlin for your support and Treasurer Marosek. A special thank you to Debbie Whitenton who worked with Frank O'Leary in entering credit cards in the device! What a job they both undertook!!

The Arlington Optimist Club is a great Club. Its members are dedicated, loyal, hardworking, smart and kind. The tree lot has been its primary fundraiser since the Club's 1947 founding. The tree lot activity use to sell 200 trees and used hand saws. Today, we sell 2200 trees using 5 chain saws. It is hard work during a very busy time for all of us. We have kept the tradition. We have expanded the operations. The tree lot project continues to find success and that is not an accident!!

Congrats to all and as I said earlier, I am honored and humbled to be a part.

Wishing all a very Merry Christmas and healthy and Happy New Year. Season 2020 is 11 months away.....

Optimistically,

Sandy Bushue



mw: 108

***Optimist Club of Arlington 16-005 ;
Mid-Atlantic Region 3;
Capital- Virginia District 16;
Northern Virginia Zone 4
www.optimistclubofarlingtonva.org***

Appendix I: Christmas Breakfast Photos (by Peter Wehmann).



Yorktown High School Chamber Choir, under the direction of Jocelyn Mullins.
The Choir includes Lizzie Burson, Erica Burson's daughter.



Richard Knight with Reggie Williams
of the Phoenix House.



JB Whitlow with Scott Miller of A-SPAN



Margaret and Clayton Depue and Erica Burson with guests Suzanne Evans (Asst Principal at Yorktown), Carmen De La Cruz (Asst Principal at W-L), and Jasneen Sahni (Asst Principal at Wakefield).

Appendix II: Tree Lot Photos during December.



Mark Zetlin's Christmas tree -- the largest one sold this year!



A favorite retired Optimist, John Karinshak, sitting in his old chair for a photo op when visiting the lot to prick up nine Christmas ornaments. Flanked by Dick McHugh and Debbie Whitenton.

Just two sets of customers who have purchased trees from the Optimists for more than 30 years:



Joe & Cindy Donahoe



Marlene Schmartz & daughter



Arlington Soccer's David and John with Yorktown Honor Society's Olivia and Kate. John Mingus has been selected as this year's #1 National Soccer Volunteer!



Babe Ruth Baseball volunteer advertising from the sidewalk. (Photo provided by Sandy Bushue).



Optimist-Acorn Club Mother & daughter (Photo provided by JB Whitlow).



Optimist-Acorns during a rare calm moment on Saturday, 12-14. (Photo by JB Whitlow).



Dick McHugh, Frank O'Leary, & Debbie Whitenton show off the last seventeen trees at start-up on December 16. After a spectacular 17-day run, rainy and then very cold weather slowed the sales of these last trees.