

# The Optimist Monthly

Friend of Youth

September 30, 2021



## September Events

**9/01: *Twenty Years Later, Remembering 9/11 and the First Responders* - Cathy Hix, President of the Arlington Historical Society and Reade Bush, a First**



**Responder who rushed to the Pentagon when the attack occurred, recount the events of that fateful day and how AHS is honoring those who so honorably and bravely served. As always, we are indebted to Frank O'Leary for our luncheon speakers. Be sure to look at Appendix 2 to see the article in the *Sun Gazette* of September 17-19 discussing another of Frank's contributions to Arlington. (Photo from her website).**

**9/15: Respect for Law Luncheon returned! Erin Mendenhall and Brian Kellenberger partnered to ensure that we continue our historic Respect for Law luncheon this year. Kudos to Erin for arranging for a special room, a special menu and a proclamation from the Arlington County Council (see Appendix 1).**



**Guests from Arlington's Police Department, Sheriff's Office and Court System pose with Erin Mendenhall (3rd from the right) on the patio of the WGCC.**



**Erin Mendenhall presents Sheriff's award to weapons specialist Corporal Rodney Singer. (Photo provided by Erin Mendenhall).**



**Judge Varoutsos awards Joanne Hamilton from the District Court's Juvenile & Domestic Relations Program.**



Past SRO officers Sgt. Aaron Queen (left) and Corporal Tiffanie Haag McGuire (right) hold the award from the Arlington Police Department on behalf of the highly successful School Resource Officer program, which has placed police officers in all Arlington high schools and middle schools as early as 1969. The Arlington County School Board voted to remove SRO's from Arlington schools on June 24, 2021.

**9/22: Meet & Greets continued at Texas Jack's. See photo below:**



**L.to R.: Eric Turner (guest of Brian Kellenberger), Peter Wehmann, Jeff Englander, Richard Knight, Tricia O'Hara, Brian Kellenberger, Sue Gartner, Tim Landis, Erin Mendenhall, JB Whitlow and Chanda Choun. (Photo provided by Jeff Englander).**



## **October Events**

**10/06: “It Takes a Village” by Jennifer Owens**, Director Arlington Community Foundation, which was established 30 years ago to serve as a permanent community endowment built by the gifts and charitable legacies of individuals, families, and businesses for the betterment of Arlington County. As a grant-maker, convener, and sponsor of special initiatives, the Community Foundation strives to strengthen local nonprofits, encourage better understanding of the needs of Arlingtonians, and address the most critical issues of our time to ensure that our community provides opportunity for everyone. Join us for a conversation with Executive Director Jennifer Owens about the unique role of a community foundation, and the recent initiatives that ACF has undertaken to help our community weather the pandemic and keep low-income residents from being displaced from our community. Let's help make Arlington be all it can be!

Also, the 2021-2022 Officers and Board of Directors will take over. The official list of the Officers and Directors are as follows:

President: Brian Kellenberger (automatic)  
President-Elect: Andreas Baltatzis (new)  
Vice President: Sandy Bushue  
Vice President: Richard Knight  
Treasurer: Gerry Marosek  
Secretary: Debbie Whitenton  
Past-President: Jeff Englander (automatic)  
Board of Directors:  
    One Year Left:  
        Mark Whitenton (automatic)  
        JB Whitlow (automatic)  
New Board Members with two-year terms:  
    Tim Landis  
    Mark Zetlin

**October 20: *To Bee or Not to Bee* by Dan Price**, Director of Sweet Virginia Foundation. Did you know that honey bees are not native to North America? How and why did they get here? More importantly, did you know that bees are vital to modern agriculture? Without them, many of the crops that we take for granted would cease to exist. Sadly, the survival of bees is in jeopardy. What's

killing them (there exists a surprising primary culprit) and what can we do to stop it? Dan Price, founder and Chief Executive of Sweet Virginia will be on hand to enlighten us. He may even bring samples of his favorite product! (How sweet of him!)

**10:27: Meet & Greet:** Please join us at Texas Jack's at 5:30.

## **November Events**

**11/03: *The Great War Remembered* by Edwin Fountain** of the American Battle Monuments Commission has been the driving force behind the creation of a monument to those American soldiers who served and fought in World War I (Over 2,000,000 went "*Over There!*" and more than 117,000 never returned). Last November, at our luncheon, Mr. Fountain shared with us Optimists the final plans for the Memorial (sadly, due to Covid-19, attendance was very low). In April of this year his dream became a reality and he has generously agreed to speak once again to update our club on all aspects of the Memorial, how it was created, and future plans. WGCC at 12:15.

**11/17: ISCC Luncheon.** The annual luncheon of the Inter-Service Club Council will again be held at the WGCC. The Optimists have regularly purchased at least a table. And remember, our own **Sandy Bushue** is the current President of the ISCC. Please join us for this important event. WGCC starting at 11:30.

## **December Events**

**12/03: Delegate Patrick Hope** – "Probable Actions by State Legislature". Again, thank you, Frank, for arranging for Delegate Hope. WGCC at 12:15. *[Frank deserves our appreciation for the extensive work he has been doing to not only provide excellent speakers for our luncheons, but also to share his informative descriptions (and occasional witticisms). Ed].*

**12/17: Christmas Breakfast.** Once again, **Brian Kellenberger** will organize our annual Christmas breakfast. It will also be the occasion to celebrate our **Optimist Club's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!** WGCC at 7:30 am.

## **Tree Lot Update by Sandy Bushue**



The Tree Lot Committee has been busy getting ready for the 2021 season. Like last year, Optimists' only role to perform on the lot is to operate the credit card device and to take the cash. You may need to answer volunteers' questions but that about sums up your responsibilities. The schedule will be sent to all in early October so you can sign-up to secure your preferred dates. Ideally, I would like all to sign up for two dates. If you can do more, that is terrific. Weekends are the busiest times as well as Thursdays and Fridays.

The inventory is the same as years past. Our trees are Fraser Fir and White Pine. We have ordered 2500 trees from 15' to the table tops. We are using the same grower from Galax, VA. The lot will have WH ornaments, wreaths and garland although the garland products are in question. We will no more soon about that.

Our sports teams ACORN, Babe Ruth Baseball, Soccer, YULA and Girls Softball are scheduled and ready to go.

Thank you, Andreas Baltatzis, for ordering overnight security. It is sad that we need to take on the extra expense, but times have changed. The security makes a difference.

The Committee agreed to make an "Opening Day" sign with the date to hang along Glebe Road so our customers are aware when we will open.

Talking to other retailers, they are preparing for another great year. They sold out early last year like we did and said they were slammed. The tree shortage continues so the wholesale tree price is up with demand increasing also.

I hope this is our best season ever!!!! We need your good help!!!!

Stay tuned for more information and the endless email updates.....

Optimistically, **Sandra Bushue**, [sandy.bushue@gmail.com](mailto:sandy.bushue@gmail.com)

## **President's Message by Jeff Englander**

To all of our members, it was an honor to lead the Optimist Club of Arlington over the past twelve months.

With your support, we have come out of the lockdowns a stronger organization. We supported our youth organization beneficiaries when they needed us the most. Our key fundraiser was a huge success despite the economic and health issues we faced last December. We reopened as soon as the Governor allowed us to restart our in-person luncheons. Many other clubs and nonprofits remained virtual.

We succeeded in achieving our mission- by providing hope and positive vision, Optimists bring out the best in youth, our communities and ourselves. You are terrific.

My sincere appreciation goes out to several folks who stepped up despite the challenges we faced this year:

- Frank O'Leary managed our luncheon speaker series through Covid and has us booked well into 2022 with exceptional presenters. One of our luncheon speakers was featured on the front page of the *Sun Gazette*!
- Mark Whitenton has led the Scholarship reviews for several cycles and composed the monthly newsletter for 10 ½ years!
- Sandy Bushue leads our fundraising committee for the past decade plus. We are now the largest tree lot, by volume, in Northern Virginia. Sandy's leadership directly impacts our satisfying the Club's mission.
- JB Whitlow has provided excellent advice and led the tree lot construction efforts -- this is a huge undertaking.
- Erin Mendenhall, with 70-days' notice, led the efforts to honor Arlington's law enforcement at our outstanding Respect For Law Day celebration.
- Gerry Marosek and Debbie Whitenton have exceptionally managed our finances and helped us with our investment strategies.
- Chanda Choun took on our IT and social media presence.
- Michel Simek maintained our strong beneficiary relationships.

- Excellent advice and counsel provided by Richard Knight, Mark Zetlin, Tricia O'Hara and Andreas Baltatzis.

Our membership has truly stood by the Club and its mission and I am very grateful for your phenomenal efforts and support. My ask is that you give my successor, Brian Kellenberger, as much support as he takes the reins beginning October 1st.

You are wonderful people. Optimistically yours, Jeff

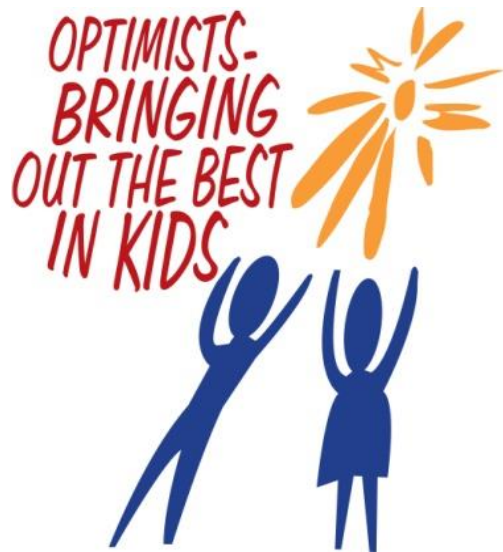
**Editor's Comment:** *Please take a moment during future events to thank Jeff Englander for doing such a great job as our President during this very difficult year. Jeff went all-out to represent the Club on many occasions by personally delivering our Club donations and awards, such as his recent visit to the Sheriff's Office to make sure that CPL Rodney Singer received his plaque (which arrived too late for the Respect for Law luncheon) in- person and in front of his colleagues. See photo, below.*



*Jeff also worked tirelessly to try to recruit new members to our Club. Due to the efforts of Jeff and several other members, three new Optimists have been*



*brought into the Club, despite a year when Covid prevented most in-person events. Thank you, Jeff, for a great job as President. (Photo provided by Jeff Englander).*



mw: 129  
Optimist Club of Arlington 16-005;  
Mid-Atlantic Region 3;  
Capital- Virginia District 16;  
Northern Virginia Zone 4;  
[www.optimistclubofarlingtonva.org](http://www.optimistclubofarlingtonva.org)

## Appendix 1

### Proclamation by the Arlington City Council for a Law Enforcement Appreciation Week"



## Appendix 2

### **Frank O'Leary Receiving Another Well-deserved Recognition:**

**From the *Sun Gazette* of September 17-19, 2021, page 2. By Scott McCaffrey**

Over the course of nearly 30 years in elected office, Frank O'Leary had a reputation for calling 'em as he saw 'em and letting the chips fall where they may. And now, in retirement, the former Arlington treasurer is equally unfiltered, when it comes to issues dear to his heart. And few, at the moment, are more dear to O'Leary than the effort to obtain the county government's participation in funding renovation and expansion of the Arlington Historical Society's Hume School museum. "It is time for our local government to step forward. Every local government in Northern Virginia – except Arlington – has fully funded one or more local museums," he said. "Alexandria alone funds three museums, and does so with a smaller population and financial base than Arlington." The remarks came on Sept. 9 as O'Leary was presented with the historical society's highest honor – the Cornelia B. Rose Jr. Award – at a dinner marking the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 terror attacks and their impact on Arlington. The historical society has proposed a top-to-bottom renovation of the late 19th-century Hume School, which it acquired from the county school system in the early 1960s but not renovated since. The estimated price tag for modernization: \$1.5 million. But in O'Leary's eyes, renovation would be just a jumping-off point "for the creation of a first-class urban museum of which all Arlingtonians will be proud." Funding an expansion in conjunction with a renovation will be the least costly option on the table, he said. "Now is the time to act," O'Leary said. "If not now, then when?" The audience of about 150 people at Washington Golf & Country Club included three current County Board members – Libby Garvey, Takis Karantonis and chairman Matt de Ferranti. Those three, or any three, of the five-member board would be enough to authorize funding out of the county government's \$1.4 billion annual operating budget to support the effort, if they so choose, or to put the matter on a bond referendum and let the public decide. (While County Manager Mark Schwartz was not in attendance, one of his predecessors – Ron Carlee, who served from 2001-09 – was. "I didn't expect to be lobbied

by Frank [for funding], but old habits never die,” Carlee said with a chuckle.) Responding to a Sun Gazette inquiry, de Ferranti suggested that funding a portion of the renovation is not on the immediate horizon. “Frank O’Leary is a friend and a good advocate,” de Ferranti said. “I am interested in his proposal, but do not feel this year is the right time to pursue it from a fiscal and economic point of view.” Why? “We are still facing significant limits on both our operating and capital budgets due to COVID,” de Ferranti said. “We must first emerge over the coming six to nine months from the health and economic challenges resulting from the pandemic, and then considered the details of the proposal.” The historical society has been presenting the award since 2014. O’Leary is the seventh to receive it. “We are all so thankful for all he’s done,” said society president Cathy Hix, pointing to O’Leary’s efforts on behalf of a host of initiatives. She called him “a wise counselor, a great friend.”