

The Optimist Monthly

Friend of Youth
December 16, 2022



December

12/07: Paul Ferguson, Arlington's Clerk of the Court. He related many stories about Frank O'Leary and also told us about the responsibilities of the Clerk's office, including signing all the "concealed weapons" licenses.



This is third time Paul has spoken to our group, but the first time he has received a plaque. Andreas Baltatzis laughs at a joke. Thank you, Frank O'Leary, for inviting Paul (again) and taking all of Paul's stories about you in good humor.

12/14: The Annual Christmas Breakfast! Pastor Drew Hill was again the speaker and gave another innovative talk. **Brian Kellenberger** inducted two new Optimist Club members: **Sydney Kellenberger** and **Gavin Authier**. Twenty-two Optimist members and over fifty guests came together for another nice Christmas Breakfast. Thank you, Brian, for managing this important event since 2012! Please check out the photos from the breakfast in Appendix 1, below.

January

1/04: Darren Aversa, Financial Advisor, to advise us on the year to come - the potential for risk, loss, and gain. Thank you, **Frank O'Leary** for inviting him. Please note that WGCC is closed for maintenance and the luncheon will be held at Texas Jack's (2761 Washington Blvd) at 12:15.

1/18: Johnathan Thomas, an Arlington native, will have many Arlington stories to tell. Once again, thank you, **Frank O'Leary** for inviting him. WGCC at 12:15.

1/25: Meet & Greet resumes. Texas Jack's from 5:30 to 7:00.

February

2/01: Wendy Zenker, Arlington Neighborhood Village. Thank you, **Frank O'Leary**, for inviting her.

President's Message by Andreas Baltatzis

Dear Optimists,

Congratulations on another successful tree lot. Despite our new location, changing banks, and ongoing tree shortage, we should have one our highest grossing seasons. Thank you to all who volunteered in the lot and those who helped behind the scenes with volunteers, marketing, and banking. It was a true team effort.



Let's also congratulate Brian on a spectacular 71st annual Christmas Breakfast. We inducted our two newest members and delivered the ISCC man of the year award to Frank. Brian also announced that we would be Chartering scout troop 149. A very proud day to be an Optimist.

I want to wish you and your families a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a Happy New Year to all. This is a wonderful time to spend with family and friends. I have certainly enjoyed spending time with my Optimist friends at the lot!

**Safe travels to all those who are leaving town.
See you all in 2023!**

Optimistically yours, Andreas

Christmas Tree Lot Update

by Sandy Bushue



Optimists,

Tree season 2022 ended on Sunday, December 11 at 12:40 pm when the last tree SOLD. In 17 days, the Optimist Club sold the following:

2,149 - Trees

308 - Wreaths

150 - Garland

241 - White House Ornaments

62 - Tree Stands

Way to go Arlington Optimists!!! We had 4.5 days of rain that were complete “wash outs”, and yet, our tree lot hummed along with activity and optimism. Thank you to all of you for your help! A big thank you to JB and Brian who seemed to be “on-call” trouble shooting. JB and Brian play a major role in the lot success! A big thank you to Andreas, our president, who was a captain and helped out with issues that developed. Frank (aka Man of the Year), thank you, for handling the loot, daily, and keeping everything organized and accounted for. Erica, we appreciated your opening the lot each day which is

such a big help!! Thank you to Jeff Englander and Bob Patton for stepping up to be lot captains and helping out along the way.

We had plenty of hardworking volunteers. Barbara Nicastro and Erica were a real team. We even had students from HB Woodlawn who did a great job! Thank you, ladies, for doing such a great job! Brian Kellenberger took this photo of the Optimist Acorns during the first crazy Saturday, below:



Michal, thank you for turning out soccer and hockey coaches and kids. A big thank you to ACORNS, YULA, AGBA and Babe Ruth for rallying to support the lot every year!

A big thank you to the PR team of Tricia, Clayton and Brian. A disgruntle customer asked me if we had hired a PR firm. He was tired of hearing the story how we were “kicked off”. He was serious too; I think he was having a bad day. And, thank you Brian Kellenberger for the outstanding signs and the flag signs which were a nice touch, such as the one to the left (photo by Brian):



I think we learned that we may schedule the unloading of trucks the day before Thanksgiving. Richard Knight had around 50 volunteers to unload three 18-wheelers. Everything worked out perfectly! Thank you, Richard, for your role in the lot's success!!!



Of course, you, the Optimist member, agreeing to work the lot and volunteering in the endeavor are the “whip and cherry on the sundae”. Thank you for supporting this Optimist tradition. When the Committee meets to plan the next season, we are always thinking about how we can make the Optimist’s job easier. Brain K. gets the award for finding the app that allows the cashier to push the name of the product(s) purchased to come up with a total and to help with inventory. Thank you, Brian, as well as JB for getting the equipment and Debbie for creating the inventory menu. Everyone loved the app and it was easy to use.

Last but not least, a HUGE thank you to the Knights of Columbus! The location worked out really well. We have so much more room and our loyal and dedicated customers seemed to be able to find us easily. I still heard those comments, “we have been buying our tree from you guys for the past 30 years”. I am so happy to think that those comments and traditions will continue. Did I mention we had more room.....next year, we are going to get more trees..... Stay tuned!!

Congratulations Optimists and thank you!!!! Wishing all a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year.

Sandy Bushue



The last tree sold! Photo by Jeff Englander

Where Did the Wreaths Come From?

The many wreaths and garland ropes that were sold were made by Justin Stalcup. These sales not only added to the profit of the tree lot, but also were a convenience to our customers. One stop shopping! See photo of Justin with Debbie Whitenton and a YULA volunteer, below. Photo of the wreaths on display taken by Andreas Baltatzis.



Optimists “Partner” with Jefferson Elementary School

by Brian Kellenberger.

These third graders from Jamestown Elementary in Arlington came to the tree lot to raise money to support the Arlington County Foster Cares holiday party.

They set up a bake sale on the lot and sold cookies, brownies, cider and a few other items. They were able to raise \$91 in a little over an hour. Photo by Brian.



The kids will use the money to buy gifts for the kids in the program. They have learned to give gifts that could be used over and over, something that didn't

require batteries for example. They have also done other chores in the community like raking leaves, getting peoples packages to raise money. The bake sale really let them explain their cause to others! They worked on their signs and cooked the bake sale items. It was a great way for the Optimists to partner with them on their project.

Arlington Optimist Club Wins Community Service Award

On December 1, the annual Vision 2050 Celebration event was held at the Dominion Electric Company. This year, they gave the Arlington Optimist Club their Community Service Award for the Club's 75 years of Service to Arlington. See photos of Andreas Baltatzis holding up the award in Dominion Electric's showroom and the company's display of Optimist trees (we donated the big one). Photos by Brian Kellenberger.



Feedback on our Annual Scholarship Program

One of our 2022 \$5,000 Scholarship winners, Mary Ann Montgomery from Bishop O'Connell, sends us her thoughts about her first semester at Oberlin. Please see her remarks and her photo in Appendix 2.



mw: 143

Photos by Mark Whitenton unless otherwise noted.

Optimist Club of Arlington 16-005;
Mid-Atlantic Region 3;
Capital- Virginia District 16;
Northern Virginia Zone 4;

www.optimistclubofarlingtonva.org

Appendix 1

Christmas Breakfast Photos



Brian Kellenberger, Chair
of the Christmas Breakfast



Jeff Englander
Introducing Frank O'Leary



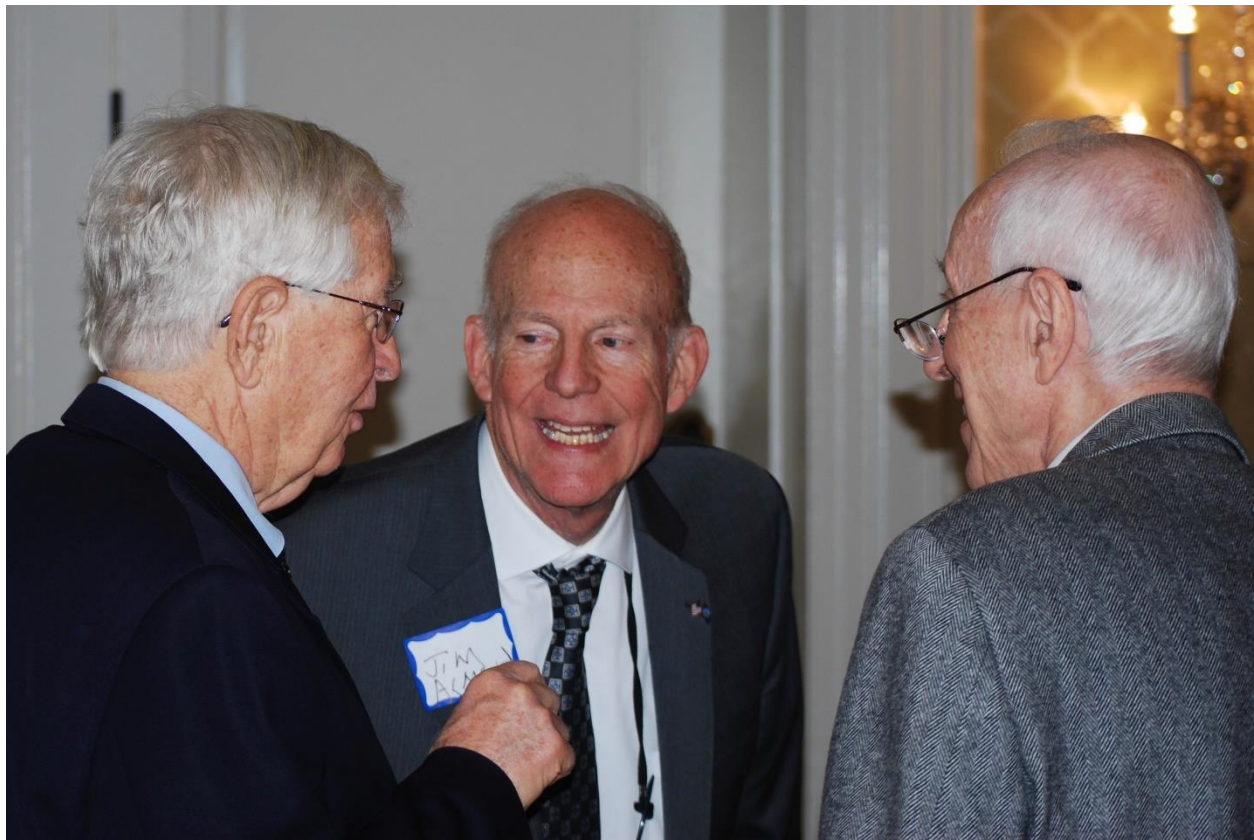
Frank O'Leary
ISCC's "Man of the Year"



Brian Kellenberger inducts Gavin Authier and Sydney Kellenberger



Pastor Drew Hill gives an animated and innovative talk to the breakfast crowd



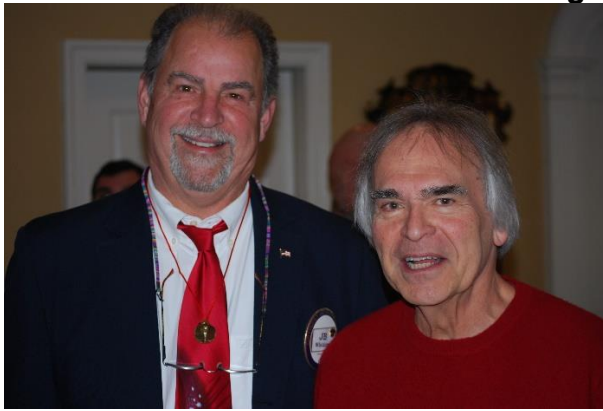
Richard Knight catches up with retired judge Jim Almand and our revered past-Treasurer, Larry Gaydos.



Tricia O'Hara helped with her beautiful voice



Ex-member, **Carla de la Pava** (now
Arlington County Treasurer) and **Erin Mendenhall**



JB Whitlow & Judge (Rtd) **George Varoutsos**



Debbie & **Mark Whitenton**



Andreas Baltatzis



Sue Gartner



Dorothy Mulumba, past
First-Place Oratorical and Essay Contest winner (now a senior at Goerge Mason)



WGCC Christmas tree (not ours!)



Steve Bouchard, who has often helped with the tree lot by sending his employees.



Peter Wehmann



Linda O'Leary



Mark Zetlin



Ed Johnson (guest of Sandy Bushue)



The Arlington Chamber of Commerce joined us with Will Mulligan (standing), Membership Engagement Manager, Steve Bouchard, Ron Brook with Boy Scout Troop 149, which the Optimist Board has voted to sponsor for 2023, and Andreas Baltatzis.

Appendix 2

2022 Scholarship winner Mary Ann Montgomery (Bishop O'Connell) update.

My First Semester at Oberlin College Mary Ann Montgomery I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here at Oberlin as a new first-year student. In the past few months that I have been here, I've found countless opportunities to build community and enrich myself culturally and academically. I had a full course load this semester, with five classes, varying in subject and difficulty. My most memorable course thus far is Introduction to Comparative American Studies. I believe it's pushed me towards further study in the field, and I'm especially interested in the interconnectedness of American society and politics as told through history and literature. I've found my professors to be unyieldingly compassionate and excited about what they are teaching. I've also joined several student organizations, including the Filipino American Student Association and have written for The Grape, the alternative student newspaper. This past November, I was able to participate in a fantastic banquet hosted by the Filipino American Student Association; a celebration of the organization's 20th anniversary at Oberlin and fundraiser for the protection of indigenous Filipino communities. I also have been completing my federal work study at a nonprofit art organization, the Firelands Association for Visual Arts, where I work as a gallery attendant on the weekends and assist in community events. Overall, I have found a great sense of community and so many opportunities to explore my academic and extracurricular interests. This coming January, I will be completing my Winter Term project in Tempe, Arizona. For the entire month of January, Oberlin students explore interests relating to their academic and personal pursuits through individual or group projects, in lieu of traditional classes. For my project, I'll be training for and running a half marathon. I'll also be conducting interviews with other female runners, in an effort to understand how certain factors such as safety play into their training, and the disproportionate experiences of female runners compared to men. This is a very interesting topic that Oberlin has offered me the opportunity to explore, and it just furthers my appreciation that I am able to attend this school. I truly am grateful to be at Oberlin, and the overall environment is one that encourages both curiosity and academic rigor. I'm looking forward to continuing my studies here, and am working towards a double major in English and (tentatively) Comparative American Studies or sociology. After Oberlin, I am considering law or graduate school.

